

In The Way

January 2023

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Welcoming and Sending

Almost every missionary I know will mention one downside to our work, and that is having to say goodbye to so many people we've welcomed. It may be saying goodbye to fellow missionaries who are moving on to new places of work, or bidding "adieu" to fellow Christians who have been called by the Lord to new places. But goodbyes are always hard.

On Sunday we said goodbye to Ann, who has been attending Ascension since early 2022. She will be leaving Montreal to be a nurse in one of Quebec's remote northern communities called Chisasibi. It's a 15 hour drive due north from Montreal (in good weather), at the end of the James Bay Road. Most of the inhabitants of the area are Cree, and suffer from some of the poorest health outcomes in the country.

Ann first came to Ascension as things were opening up post-COVID. She came from a Zionist Pentecostal Christian background, and was interested in giving Lutheranism a try. One of our conversations centered on spiritual disciplines and what they looked like in our tradition. We talked about the importance of vocation, and how her work as a nurse was her "spiritual discipline." She was called by the Lord to care for her patients and to seek to be what Professor Gibbs would call a "remarkable" nurse. She has taken that call on her life to heart! We will stay in touch with her and support her spiritually, since the options for good, Scriptural Christian community are extremely limited.

At the same service where we wished Ann godspeed we welcomed our newest member, Alex, into our communion. Alex had been a Roman Catholic when younger but was also looking for a Lutheran church. After several weeks of instruction he joined and will be bringing his two young boys as well. His wife and mother both attended the confirmation, and Deb and I plan on following up with his whole family with visits.

Sometimes we say hello, and sometimes goodbye, but we always remain united in the Good News of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Mission Moment

"Wait. We're getting another weekend snowstorm? Oh, no!"

The pattern in Montreal since mid-December has been rather repetitive. Relatively nice weather Monday through Wednesday, then a wallup of snow. Rinse and repeat. It happened on December 16, again on December 23, once again on January 20, and just this last weekend on January 27.

With street parking almost non-existent due to packed snow drifts that had yet to be cleared, we expected worship attendance on January 29 to be "low." We were instead surprised to have 49 people at worship, over a third of whom were visitors. Some were family members attending Alex's adult confirmation. Others were Sikhs from the neighbourhood invited to attend via our WhatsApp group. Still others were Reformed Baptists who have been visiting with us for a few Sundays now. We even had a Lutheran visitor from Maryland. We even had another 15 members attending online via Zoom.

As I write this on Monday January 30, the snow keeps coming. We will beat our 1999 record of over 3 feet of snow in January. Yet whether snowing or sleeting, warm or cold, the Lord will call his people to hear his Word and receive his grace.



A Picture's Worth of Words



Clockwise from Top Left: Alex is confirmed; Sophia's 16th Birthday Party; Snow in Parc-Ex on a Sunday; mission brunch with the Stones; Godspeed to Ann.

Prayer Concerns

For Ann, as she moves north, that we would be able to care for her spiritually and that she would visit with us when she returns on furloughs,

For Alex who has joined our fellowship and for Peter as he continues to deepen his relationship with Christ at Ascension,

For Vahid, as we spend time studying the Scriptures and learning English together,

For our family, as we await a return to our home in the spring.

Support this Work

To be announced! Until our accounts are officially changed, support can still be sent care of "ST-ONGE" at Mission Central or "ST-ONGE" at the LCMS:

Mission Central
40718 Highway E16
Mapleton, IA 51034

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