

Bridge Street House of Prayer

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THE BSHOP IS A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY SURRENDERED TO THE LOVE OF JESUS WORKING IN US AND THROUGH US TO BRING TRANSFORMATION TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD THAT WILL MULTIPLY IN THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS THROUGH COMMUNITIES OF PRAYER.

THE REBUILDING

Isaiah 61:1-7 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; but you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy.

I have spent a lot of time reading and meditating on Isaiah 61 as we have just wrapped up another 40 days of 24/7 prayer, during which this chapter was the theme. Before this, I had read Isaiah 61 many times, especially the beginning couple of verses. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me..." These are the words that Jesus Himself quotes in Luke 4 as the mark and purpose of His ministry. This especially resonates with us, as this is why we are here on the West Side... to preach Good News to the poor. To proclaim the message of Jesus to a neighborhood that is dying (literally) to hear that He is alive.

A second part of this Scripture that has resonated with me over the years is the promise of ancient ruins being rebuilt and devastations of many generations being restored. This is the cry of our hearts in this neighborhood. As we have first row seats to the desolation of several generations, our hearts long for the restoration that Isaiah talks about.

During these recent 40 days of prayer, however, there was one word that stuck out to me more than ever...

They...

"They will be called oaks of righteousness..." "They will build up the ancient ruins..." "They will repair the ruined cities..."

Who are *they*? Well, Isaiah tells us in the first verse. Who is he talking about? The poor! The poor are "they." So, Isaiah is saying that the poor, who after hearing and receiving the Good News, will repair the ancient ruins. (That little biblical exposition is brought to you free of charge!)

Whoa! Think about that with me for a minute. So, what this is saying is that it isn't just the Bridge Street House of Prayer that will rebuild the West Side. Rather, as we preach the Good News to our neighbors here on the West Side... *they* will rebuild the West Side.

Niko... Nick.. Angela... Alex... Nicole... David... *They!*

If you have any idea who these people that I just listed are, you would say... No way! Not a chance! That is impossible. That is what we are tempted to say. Yet, this is what God has called us to. And then I am reminded that Paul tells us that God is able to do "far more abundantly than all that we ask or think."

So, we have hope and we press on. And we believe that *they* will rebuild this neighborhood.

Ryan Waalkes



Day of Jubilee!

THE SAME SPIRIT

"After [Peter and John] prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

When I read the story of the early church in Acts, I am astonished at the boldness with which these simple-minded young men minister. Instantly in the face of resistance, they preach the Gospel boldly and heal the sick just like their Teacher did. And when I read these stories, I think to myself, "Isn't the same Holy Spirit alive today, right here, in Grand Rapids?"

Indeed, He is alive.

Let me introduce you to the youth of BellaVista Church. This small group of high school students made such a profound impact on our city in only a few short days, ministering with the same boldness that I read about in Acts 4. One of those days was spent focusing on God's heart to protect life, and specifically how abortion is against the heart of God. Hours were spent praying on location at one of the two abortion clinics in Grand Rapids. Mary, who leads the ministry there, reported a major increase in women choosing to not abort their children since Immersion students began coming down and praying there in mid June. She said that since our Immersion students have been there to pray this summer, they have had more decisions for life than they have had in the last several months combined. She said they are running out of baby bags and materials that they give to young girls that choose life.

A student on our last Immersion trip experienced the boldness of the Holy Spirit coming upon him while prayer walking with two fellow high school students. Strolling down the sidewalk, he felt a strong conviction that he needed to knock on the door of a particular house and pray for the woman who lives there. (He had seen her on the porch the day before.) He said that his heart was beating out of his chest he was so nervous, but as he approached the house was filled with boldness. The woman invited them in and he had the opportunity to talk with her and pray for her. She was incredibly touched by their kindness. He said the Holy Spirit just gave him the words and the boldness to step out in faith.

Come on! This is the same Spirit that filled the apostles on the

day of Pentecost to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ at work in high school students on the west side of Grand Rapids. The power of God moving in these young people is absolutely undeniable.

These are only a few of the many stories coming out of Immersion this year. Praise God with us, and please pray for the remaining two groups coming July 29 and August 12.



Derek Sterenberg

DAY OF JUBILEE

Every time we have an event like our annual Day of Jubilee, God always humbles me and exalts Himself. This year was no exception.

Thursday evening I was coming up short on volunteers and I was TIRED (just rounding off 8 months of pregnancy and had an unexpectedly full day).

By Friday morning, to no credit of my own (in fact I'm still not quite sure how they got connected with us), I had a group of 7 volunteers, on a Serve Project from Canada show up to help!

They and others went straight to work as we set up clothes, books, games, and household items around the Pavilion and Tabernacle. Neighbors stopped in with baby items to give away. We prayed for the day to be a taste of the Kingdom of God and opened the doors to around 40 families who came and "bought without money."

In spite of heavy rain and even a power outage later in the afternoon, the day was just what we hoped it would be: a chance to model and invite our neighborhood, as well as our own family and friends (you!) into extravagant giving, an opportunity to meet and develop relationships with neighbors, and a way to meet practical needs in our neighborhood.

At the end of the day, it was clear to me that God had had His way, in spite of my own weaknesses and inadequacies. Praise Him!

Alicia Waalkes

prayer

Thank you for praying. Here are some things you can be praying for.

- Pray for grace and wisdom as we steward these ministries.
- Pray for BSHOP staff as we move forward with ministry.
- Pray for grace over our community life.
- Pray for protection of our minds, bodies, and hearts.
- Pray for our neighbors and our relationships with them and for real transformation in our neighborhood.

The Pavilion @ 1056 Bridge is open from noon - 5 pm Monday - Friday

Our Saturday Evening Worship Gatherings begin at 7 pm every Saturday in the Tabernacle @ 1054 Bridge