

Church Family

In John 5, Jesus encounters a man by a pool. This pool was no ordinary pool. According to the tradition, at certain times, an angel would come to stir the water, and whoever stepped in first would be healed of any illness or malady they may have had. So you can imagine the crowd that surrounded this pool; the lame, the sick, and the dying, all laying there waiting with anticipation and anxiety, hoping to be the first in when the water moved. It is in this atmosphere that Jesus comes looking for one specific man.

This particular man had been an invalid for over thirty-eight years of his life and had been, for a long time, lying by this pool hoping he would make it into these healing waters. Jesus sees him lying there and asks him a simple question, "Do you want to be healed?" Now instead of giving Him the simple answer of "Yes" (I mean, that is why he is lying by this pool in the first place, right?), he does what a lot of us do when faced with the simple questions of the Promises of God: he starts to explain why he **cannot** be healed and begins to make excuses to justify his brokenness, "There is no one to help me into the pool, I am not fast enough, I am too far away, I am not able." All through these excuses, the Great Healer Himself is standing right there next to him and asking him, "Do you want to be healed?" The healing this man has hoped for, for so many years, is within his grasp, but all he can see is the many reasons why it **cannot** be possible. And yet, Jesus in His Mercy ignores his excuses and tells the man what he must do, "Get up, take up your bed and walk." It was as if He was saying, "Quit looking at all the reasons of why it **cannot** happen and look at the One, Me, the Only One who **can** make it happen." The man hears the voice of Jesus, obeys—and is completely healed.

I believe this encounter is a prophetic picture of what God is doing here in Oglala, all across this Lakota Nation, and hopefully all over America. I can hear the voice of Jesus asking us this simple question, "Do you want to be healed?" You would think our answer is yes, but the truth is, for years, for decades, we've been answering this question just as that man did; with all our fears, all our apprehensions, our excuses and reasons for why it **cannot** happen, and then we wonder why we are still lying down in our brokenness with our healing/deliverance seemingly forever out of reach. I believe Jesus in His Great Mercy and Compassion is passing over all our excuses and is now telling the Lakota people, the church here on the reservation and all across America, "Get up, take up your bed and walk." It is time. No more excuses, no more reasons why it **cannot** be and no more waiting for something to happen. We know all the reasons why healing, deliverance and salvation **cannot** come to the Lakota people, to the churches in this land and beyond, the enemy has made the "**cannots**" abundantly clear.

We read about it in the news and see it displayed with every suicide, every broken home and every lost cause. And yet, Jesus has been standing here the whole time telling us that **He can** and more so **wants** to bring healing to our brokenness, hope to our despair, and life to our death. It is the Heart of the Father and easily within in His Power to heal us, spirit, soul and body, if only we will look to Jesus and heed his command to "Get up, take up our beds and walk."

Please continue to pray with us as we walk together with our Lakota brothers and sisters to learn and experience the Wonders and Love of our Father and expand His Kingdom to every corner of this land with the Good News that **Jesus can and wants to heal us completely and perfectly.** Thank you.

Sincerely in Jesus, Pastor Eric & Ela Sutton



OASIS Youth Ministry

We have also encountered some people in a pool! And in some ways, this was no less a miracle than what Jesus did 2,000 years ago, for He is still seeking and speaking to those who need Him—as our youth surely does. As a reward for the teens from Mary's Bible Study who learned all their memory verses by heart, we took them swimming and enjoyed a great day together.

Earlier this spring, we were able to partner with friends and fellow missionaries from Oglala and took a group of 20 youth to Dare2Share in Denver, CO. Every teenager who went was impacted by God's Word and heard a clear gospel message. One highlight from the event was to see the teens lay hands on their leaders and pray for them. That is by far what all our sweat and toil is for, to see others believe what John 1:12 says and live it out. I am convinced the teens are hearing God's word; we need to pray that it will truly change their lives!



Friday nights continue, and I feel that if we were to stop them the teens might lynch me. 😊 Basketball may be the lure, but Jesus is the hook! My goal is to get every youth to know and understand the true gospel message, to realize that a loving God has created them for a relationship with him based on his mercy and grace. Please pray that opportunities will abound to share these Good News one on one.



Leon & Mary Schwartz,
Youth Leaders

Kids' Church

Proverbs 3:3-4
"Let love and faithfulness never leave you; Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man."



Terry and I challenged the Children's Church children to share their faith with friends and family. Faith requires action and brings rewards. Six of our children led at least two of their friends in the sinner's prayer. One said this prayer with her mother, and another had a group of five or six school friends praying with her, including her teacher.

God blessed them to enjoy a trip to Peppy's Pizza in Rapid City (see picture above).



Terry & Kathy Michels,
Children's Pastors

Royal Rangers

The Royal Rangers program has been a challenging yet rewarding endeavor. No matter how many iPhones or Xboxes are in their hands, almost every boy still loves to shoot a bow and arrow, sit around a campfire, go on a bike ride, or just enjoy the outdoors—that's the way God created us, and it is why we love them! 😊



This year so far we have taught our Ranger boys archery and morse code, built Pine Wood Derby cars, and spent a night "camping" in the sanctuary. During devotions, we did an in-depth study of the Ranger Code, and it was amazing to see how fast these boys were able to memorize the different aspects of the code—even though many of them probably don't pay much attention at school... Attendance has remained steady and even grew to the point where we had to split up the group.

With summer fast approaching, we are looking forward to some more over-night camping, maybe even a canoe trip.



Heidi's notes

As I am writing this note, there are 125 people flowing through every empty space in & outside the Rec Center. Each April we host a Christian school from Denver that brings its 8th grade classes to Oglala as an outreach and service project. They spend 3 days helping in local schools, having sports camps, playing with our kids and learning about the Lakota people and their customs, sharing the love of God in the process.



It was on a similar trip that I first came to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 1992. I had never heard of this place and didn't know much about Native Americans in general. Having the school group here has made me think about the way God calls us to situations and places that on our own we might never have gone.

My thoughts move on from here to the children that I see at the Rec Center every day. Which ones will God call to go to foreign lands to serve him? Who will he ask to stay and serve him right where they grew up? Will any of them be pastors or go to bible school? Will some of them become parents that share Christ with their children or work in jobs where they can be a light in the workplace?



It is not the gardening, the basketball, cooking or pushing kids on the swing that will have eternal value. It's not VBS, crafts or swim trips that really matter. But these are the avenues God has given us to share his love with this community just like he used a fun trip when I was a teenager to give me direction in my life. I look forward to the day when we see the harvest of the seeds that were planted on this reservation!

P.S.: The gardening season has begun! My little helpers and I have already planted lettuce, radishes, peas and lots more in the garden, and in the greenhouse we have some tomatoes getting an early start. I also planted about 20 more small trees along our property line.

Heidi Martin



BULLETIN BOARD

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

As usual this newsletter is much too short to talk about all that's been going on here in our ministry. But it is also true that sometimes we don't want to say everything either. There is so much heartbreak around us every day; it is a daily struggle to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus...

Our church family is still small but determined to keep fighting the good fight, and we are thankful for everyone who supports us in prayer. Please feel free to use the pictures and texts on our website to stay updated and pray for the events even when they're already over—believe us, there is always something going on! Also, we are (hopefully soon!) going to post an updated picture of the Rec ministry team on our website, so please stay in touch @ www.oglarwc.org

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ♥ Please join us in prayer for the church body on the reservation that all of us would boldly and without any more fear or doubt expect Jesus to move MIGHTILY because HE CAN!
- ♥ For Pastor Eric & Ela as they are finally no longer separated by an ocean but will start their life and ministry together in Oglala
- ♥ For Leon & Mary as they continue to reach out to the youth, tame a wild toddler ☺ and also expect another baby due in September
- ♥ For Terry & Kathy who are enjoying a much-needed vacation for rest and new strength
- ♥ For Heidi to see Jesus touch her garden helpers' hearts as well as her own
- ♥ For the ongoing suicide epidemic among the youth that Jesus would reveal himself to those who desperately seek Hope and Love
- ♥ For the Kids' Church children, Royal Ranger boys and the Bible Study teens that Jesus would continue to speak to them even during summer break, and that they would listen
- ♥ For our upcoming summer mission teams at The Rec Center for protection, guidance, Finances, and servant hearts

Oglala Re*Creation & Worship Center

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS



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