

Church Family

"Same Ole, Same Ole." This is a phrase I have really begun to hate, and yet it is a phrase I have used more than most. "How's life treating you, Eric?" "Same Ole, Same Ole." "How is it going in Oglala?" "Same Ole, Same Ole." "How is the ministry going?" "Same Ole, Same Ole."

Maybe you have been one of those to ask me a question, only to receive that reply from me. It is a phrase that is dismissive in form and function, and finds its source in the place of despair. To translate, from my perspective, it says that nothing has changed, all is the same and probably will remain so. Over the last several months, the Holy Spirit has begun to radically change my mind and heart in a way that has shown me the folly and danger of the "Same Ole, Same Ole" and the poisonous perspective on life that it produces.

A month ago, we as a ministry team shut down the Rec for the week and locked ourselves in our sanctuary to seek the Face of God together. We put aside all ministry and responsibilities, and instead spent 8 hours a day together in a room praying, fasting, worshiping, reading and discussing the Word of God. It was a powerful and God-ordained time that not only brought us closer together as a family but closer together with our God. So many beautiful things happened that week. But one of the truths that came alive to me is that the "Same Ole, Same Ole" is a lie. For years, I allowed the circumstances of ministry and what is taking place in our community to be the measuring rod of my faith and walk in Jesus. So if the ministry and community were doing well, then my faith was strong. If not, then my faith was weak, and I obviously was a failure. What a lie from hell! The truth which the Spirit is showing and teaching me is that my situation or circumstance don't matter—I can be as close to Jesus as I want. I can grow in faith and become, step by step, the man of God that He created me to be, totally independent of what is taking place around me. I have had to ask myself some pretty basic and important questions: Is He who He says He is or not? Did Jesus do enough at the Cross to set me free? Does His Spirit live inside of me? Am I a new creation in Christ Jesus or not? If yes, then it's time I walk, think, talk, act and live in that reality. No more waiting around for some Burning Bush moment, an Angelic visit, a revival that may or may not come, or for others to agree and join with me. I want to, and I now realize that I can, walk in the Spirit, the Fullness of God dwelling in me, **NOW!** Not tomorrow, not when the stars align, not when I feel more "spiritual," but **NOW.** I want to be able to say with Paul:

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Is He living in us or not?

So even while our circumstances here in Oglala and the ministry haven't changed much and it would seem the "Same Ole, Same Ole" prevails, we decided that Jesus is real, alive, present and victorious, and He has promised to make all things new. We count ourselves, Oglala, and the Lakota people as a part of the "All Things," making the "Same Ole, Same Ole" obsolete and just a plain lie. No matter the circumstance or situation, we will deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Him. I mean where else could we go? He has the Words of Life. And as we keep our eyes on Him, we are being transformed into the Same Image from Glory to Glory, always and forever new. Praise the One who lives forevermore in me and in you!

Speaking of turning away from the "Same Ole, Same Ole," Ela and I are expecting, any minute now, the arrival of our little girl. We couldn't be more excited and terrified at the same time. For me personally, this is a dream come true. When asked what they want to be when they grow up, most boys would say a ball player, an astronaut or a doctor; I just always wanted to be a dad. Now I get to live that dream realized. Thank you everyone for your prayer and support. We love and appreciate you and hope to see you soon.

Pastor Eric & Ela Sutton

Youth Ministry

One thing I have often taken for granted is knowledge of Old Testament Bible stories. Thanks to "Superbook" movies and his children's Bible, my 4-year old son already knows several of them by heart. One night while I was reading yet another page to him, I realized that he already knows more than the average youth in Oglala. So I felt that it was time to go back to basics and use our devotions on Friday nights to "just" tell Bible stories. Within the old stories, timeless Truth can be found, and it is extremely rewarding to hear what the teens get out of the stories. Maybe in part because it has always been a cultural practice to teach through stories; after all, the Lakota were an oral culture! But whatever the reason, God is moving through His Word.



Wednesday night Teen Bible Study has also started again. This school year, Mary is teaching the youth through Bible-based art and craft projects, and so far they have had great conversations and some fun. ☺

Leon & Mary Schwartz, Youth Leaders

Kids' Church



*You gave up your throne for a manger
Traded a crown for a cross
Laid down your life for a stranger
And for all who are broken and lost*

The Kids' Church children will be presenting this song to their families during our Christmas program this year. Usually the kids are rather shy and unwilling to step out on the stage in front of a crowd, but this time they are really excited and already working hard towards the event. Several of them also got together and learned "Jesus Loves Me" from a youtube video; they even choreographed and surprised us with their own "cheers." Please pray for the friends and families of our children to accept Jesus. Our Christmas outreach will take place on Sunday, December 10, 2017.

Terry & Kathy Michels, Children's Pastors



NEW: Outreach

Meet our new staff, Elliot and Crystal Morales. Born and raised in New York City, they moved to Concord, NC in 2005 where Elliot attended and graduated from FIRE School of Ministry. After serving there for 9 years, the Lord laid it on their hearts to move to South Dakota and serve on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. They joined our Rec team this summer as outreach pastors. Their hearts' desire is to see people walking in freedom and in love with Jesus. In December 2016 the couple welcomed their daughter, Everly Hope, through the wonderful gift of adoption.



Royal Rangers

During their third camp this summer, the Rangers hiked up to breathtaking 11,800 ft in "Never Summer Wilderness" in Colorado.

Braving the wild and the weather, the boys got physically challenged, yet their spirits were strengthened by this great outdoor adventure. And thanks to their experienced tour guides, nobody got lost or eaten by a bear! ☺ After returning to civilization, the Rangers stopped in Denver to visit Mile High Stadium.



Heidi's Notes

In the time when scattered trees drop their leaves to blow across the prairie floor,

and the air turns crisp even as the sun rays warm my skin and make my heart long for summer days gone by;

Harvest has come, and begs preparation and thanks to the One who provided.

Echoes of youth drift near, chased from the dome of nature to a building made of blocks;

Hunger is met, for the body, for the soul,

Words are spoken, for the mind, for the soul,

And through it all the Spirit breathes life into the weak and weary, shines in the places of the deep, whispers truth so it may be found.

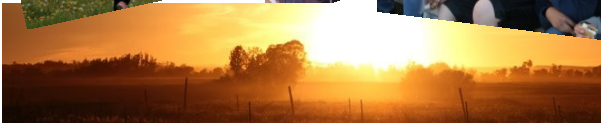
Yesterday has passed, tomorrow has yet to find its place of rest, but as for today? Today I can say....

I am Blessed.

Heidi Martin



Summer Review



BULLETIN BOARD

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Our Church Family will grow by "one" soon—when the Suttons have had their baby! ☺ Other than that, we are still waiting, praying and believing for the great outpour of God's Spirit in Oglala and one the whole Pine Ridge Reservation, and for lasting growth in the Body of Christ in numbers and in depth.

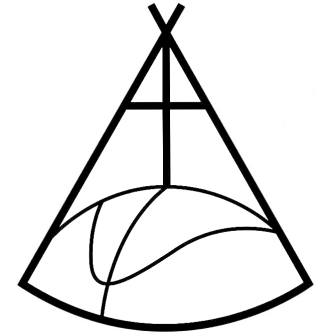


Well, we're all the more thankful for the addition to our team, and we ask you to pray with us for the Morales' outreach ministry alongside us here in Oglala. And PLEASE also continue to pray with us for new children's pastors as we are still asking the Lord to send workers into this precious and plentiful Harvest.

As always, this Newsletter is just a very short glimpse into recent events and into our hearts. Much more, and many more pictures, are on our website www.oglarwc.org!

MORE PRAYER REQUESTS

- ♥ Please pray that the "Same Old, Same Old" in and around us will be broken and replaced by Him who makes all things New
- ♥ Pray for a safe birth for Baby Sutton and wisdom, health, and joy for the new parents
- ♥ Pray for the Oglala youth for a growing hunger, knowledge and deeper understanding of the awesome, timeless Word of God
- ♥ Pray for Leon and Mary as they teach the teens for Jesus to speak through them
- ♥ Pray for the upcoming Christmas Celebration for the message to pierce hearts and lead to Repentance, Transformation, and Hope
- ♥ Pray for new children's pastors with a big heart for Jesus and for the Oglala youth to take over the Michels' ministry
- ♥ Pray for open doors and hearts as Elliot visits homes, jail cells, and hospital rooms
- ♥ Pray for Heidi to write more poems ☺ and to touch the hearts of those around her
- ♥ Thank God for His Faithfulness, Provision, Direction, Strength, and Unfailing Love



Oglala Re*Creation
and Worship Center
- TIPI WAKAN -
A Light In The Darkness



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