

BUS MINISTRY HELPERS

WELCOME TO WEST VIRGINIA

Watching the final pieces of the puzzle come together for Evansville Baptist Church was such an encouragement. It was like watching your child take their first steps on their own. It's a joy like no other. Less than a week after finishing with Evansville, God opened the door for the next church to help. There is something special about this particular church though. It is not only back in our home state of West Virginia, but within 10 minutes of an area that John has long had a burden for. So, in March we packed up the RV and headed from Cortland OH to Charlton Heights WV. Unfortunately, we could not find a good safe location that would allow a stay longer than 14 days. Once again God worked everything out. This time in the form of a furnished apartment. While the extra space was wonderful, we missed our home. Once again God blessed by providing a place to hook up our RV and we were able to be back in our little home the 1st of May.

Our first meeting at New Heights Baptist Church was an amazing one! This was the most participation from a church we have ever seen. So many servants willing to work in whatever area needed so more people could be reached truly encouraged us. The first Saturday of visitation we had an amazing group come out and we were able to make a lot of visits. Although we had many promises to ride the van, when Sunday morning came 1 little girl got on. She told us something on the way home that will forever remind me it's worth it all. She said, "thank you for coming to West Virginia, and coming to Kimberly, and driving down my street, and stopping at my house to pick me up so I can learn more about Jesus."



1 CORINTHIANS 3:7

1 CORINTHIANS 3:7 SO THEN NEITHER IS HE THAT PLANTETH ANY THING, NEITHER HE THAT WATERETH; BUT GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE.

We say all the time that a successful bus ministry is not the result of the Bates family. We are simply willing vessels for the Lord. God must give the increase. This work has been the perfect example of that fact. The first 4 weeks were filled with work, work, and more work. Door knocking was not just Saturday, but 3-4 times a week. Over 500 flyers promoting the bus were given out. John spent hours searching for a bus the church could purchase. At one point we thought we had the right bus. John, the Pastor, and another brother in the church took a 2-day journey from West Virginia all the way down to Mississippi with the intent to bring this bus back. As soon as they laid eyes on it there was doubt in the hearts of all 3 of them. When they took it for a test drive, the doubts became confirmation that this was definitely NOT the bus. Shortly after they returned home, John found another bus. This time in Indiana, which is a whole lot closer than Mississippi! Although it was a 2004, which is older than what we had hoped for, the bus had been owned by only the church now selling it, garage kept the entire time, and had only 28,000 ORIGINAL miles on it! It met all the wants and needs for the church. When John called about it, he was super excited to find out we were the first ones to call! But any excitement quickly faded when our offer was immediately declined. All these dead ends led us to only one conclusion. Something was hindering this work. Was it Satan fighting, or God trying to get our attention. If you have read any of our past newsletters, or have known John for any amount of time, you will know what his answer to this was. PRAYER AND FASTING.

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JEREMIAH 33:3

**CALL UNTO ME, AND I WILL
ANSWER THEE, AND SHEW THEE
GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS,
WHICH THOU KNOWEST NOT.**



The challenge was given during a Wednesday night service. The church, in unity, was asked by the Pastor to fast. No show of hands, no signup sheet, just the understanding to do as God leads for as long as He leads you to. That Saturday morning 11 people showed up for visitation! We were able to canvas an entire neighborhood! Even though we finished the afternoon with no new riders for the bus, everyone had great visits and the Gospel was given to many homes that day. After visitation John was checking his messages and one of the messages was from the seller of the bus in Indiana. His message said "We had a meeting today, and all the offers we had come in for the bus were for the same exact amount as yours. Since you were the first to call, we thought you should have the first chance. If you still are interested let me know." We about fell on the floor! Yes, we were still interested! God worked a true miracle with the bus and the blessings didn't stop there! Sunday morning brought 4 new kids on the van and 7 other visitors, that were invited sometime on Saturday, driving in themselves! It was a great reminder of how important it is to not only make sure our hearts are right with God, but also to show how much we really desire to see God do a work in something. John and Pastor Neeson took a trip Indiana, looked at the most beautiful 20-year-old bus they had ever seen and drove it back to its new home at New Heights Baptist Church.

The work is continuing on here at New Heights Baptist Church. The bus has been picking up not only kids, but we also have 2 families that were reached through door knocking, riding on Sundays. Two men from the church are studying now to take their CDL test and will go in June to a class that after passing will send them home as a CDL driver. The church is working now to set up a schedule for bus workers and Junior Church teachers, and John and I are helping wherever needed. We are at the point now where we travel to visit other churches on Wednesday nights telling them about the ministry and seeking the next stop on our journey. Our family has learned so much during this past year. We have seen God do amazing things, not just in churches, but in our own personal lives as well. Please pray with us as we seek His will in our lives. The need for the lost to hear the Gospel is greater today than ever before. The Lord is returning soon. We know that, but Satan knows it also. We all must be busy doing our Father's business and compelling the lost sheep to come into the fold!



Crazy Hat Sunday 5/19/2024



ROMANS 15:21

**BUT AS IT IS WRITTEN, TO WHOM HE WAS NOT SPOKEN OF, THEY
SHALL SEE: AND THEY THAT HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND.**