

FAITH STORY 12/8/02

Good Morning. My name is Bruce Eaton and I bring you warm greetings from everyone at Waterbrooke Fellowship.

This is the first time I have seen the the new look of the sanctuary and it is really great to see.

For me it's a great blessing to be here this morning. Seeing so many of my long time friends I do feel like I am back home here. This church has rich godly legacy and I feel blessed to have been apart of it.

As a young boy at this church, I remember people like Esther Sammuelson, Ron Anderson, Howie Hutchins and many many others who gave of there time and talents as teachers to educate me about the heart and mind of God....even as I attempted, at times, to teach them about the attention span and energy levels of a very active boy. It was teaching that stayed with me even through my college years as I rebelled and tested the world's ways.

I've heard many inspiring messages from pastors Joel and Dan and others in this sanctuary talking about truly trusting God with our lives.

In this church I heard many missionaries over the years tell of their stories of faith and perseverance in distant lands and wonder would I have that kind of faith and could I make those sacrifices?

About 3 years ago my wife Gina and I faced a very difficult decision which would challenge our faith. The lord had spoken to Bill and Maureen Bonner, who attended this church, about using their pastoral and teaching skills to plant a new church. They were open to go anywhere, but as they prayed God showed and led them to consider starting a church right in their own backyard of Victoria, just 11 miles west of here.

Gina and I, along others from this congregation, made the decision to follow the spirits leading. You sent us with your prayers, support and blessings and Waterbrooke Fellowship was born.

In 3 quick years God has led many people through our doors at the two locations we have met at. Starting at the Victoria city hall, where we actually had to clear out the bar area every Sunday to make room for the nursery, to where we meet now, at the Holy Family Catholic high school, we have seen God moving. Hearts have been change, decisions to live for Christ have been made and children and adults have demonstrated their faith through baptism. Now we praise God because our small worship area is slowly becoming tighter and tighter with the new faces we see every Sunday.

A couple years ago Maureen Bonner found herself walking and praying for God to provide a home for Waterbrooke. She prayed specifically for some farm land situated off of county rd 43 just outside of town. About a year later that 13 acres of land went up for sale and was priced way out of our reach, at over \$700,000. To make a long story short, the land was not out of God,s reach and Waterbrooke and God now own that land. The name of the road that the land sits by is

called "Church Lake Road" and will be the cities main access road. The property is about as centrally located in the city limits as one can get and is across from a new residential area called Watermark. City plans call for over 2000 homes to be built over the next 5 to 10 years. The land even has a small brooke running through it to lake Wasserman. Praise God for his faithfulness!

So today we are following God's leading to build a permanent physical church home that would accommodate our growth and provide ministry and worship space.

We have called upon the talents of Ridgewood's own, Paul Youngquist and his Architectural firm to help determine our needs and develop some initial plans for budgeting. Current plans call for a 10,500 sq. ft building at a cost between 1.2 and 1.5 million dollars. A sanctuary that will hold approx. 300 people, 5 classrooms, a nursery, offices and a small kitchen are all included in the initial building phase. A prayerful and spirit led decision to wait to begin building construction until finances have been raised, has been accepted by the congregation.

We believe that God has not only given us a vision to be a church, a body of Christ followers, but to be a ministry resource center, and a community gathering place. We have been blessed with a congregation with many different ministry callings and opportunities are emerging all the time. One such opportunity was a short term mission trip to work with a Gypsy orphanage and small churches in Hungry which Gina, my oldest son Emery and I have just returned from this week. It has been an incredible blessing to see God working. I do think that a church, established to be the body of Christ and led by the Holy spirit is one of God's most powerful gifts in reaching the lost.

Our building campaign has been named "Grow by The Water" and we are faithfully waiting to see God continue to work in a mighty way. Through out this whole adventure we have seen God bring the right people together at the right time. We continue to struggle to get to, what is called a critical birth weight for a new church. Dependence on God to bring people for the many tasks and trusting that monthly budget shortfalls will be covered, has been a powerful faith lesson in itself.

Everyone at Waterbrooke Fellowship would like to thank you for your support and prayers. I can't tell you how encouraged we all are when we see familiar faces visit us from Ridgewood. We invite you to come and visit us anytime.

I would also like to ask you to continue to pray for Bill and Maureen as they lead our small congregation and that the unity of the holy spirit would prevail as we continue to step out in faith.

I have brought some brochures which are available in the back, for those that maybe interested in additional information regarding Waterbrooke's building plans.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you this morning and may God bless you all.

Bruce Eaton