

Dear Church Family

It is Wednesday morning 6th July. I am typing these words while Jan & I are passengers on the sky car of the 'Canadian' overland train en route from Vancouver to Toronto. We're very well, chatting with Darren from London, having a great holiday and we've been very privileged to meet some wonderful people and see some amazing sights along the way.

Let me tell you about Ann, our amazingly dynamic and engaging SERVAS host for the two nights we spent in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. At 67, she is a retired University English lecturer, an elite Canoe Marathoner and quite involved in her local Baptist Church where she sings in the choir. Ann described herself as a divorced mother of three who is 22 years sober and a recovering alcoholic who faithfully attends her AA meeting every week. (Alcoholics Anonymous) Her home was a little chaotic, but you couldn't fault her generosity!

On our way to a Jazz Festival on Sunday afternoon, her young friend Ashleigh phoned. She had cut her hand on a broken glass at home and was not sure if it needed stitches. We diverted our drive to call and help Ashleigh decide that the cut should at least be seen to by a Doctor.

Five hours, some enjoyable outdoor jazz by the river and ten stitches later, the four of us prepared and enjoyed baked ham and salad dinner and a long conversation. Ashleigh is 22, struggling to break out of an abusive relationship, seven months pregnant and sober for the first time since she was 15. Ann is her AA sponsor – and likely saviour!!

What a joy to see God at work bringing hope, love and genuinely compassionate support in tough circumstances. Please pray for Ashleigh as she decides if she might keep her baby or offer him up for adoption. As our journey continues and we look forward to the next weeks, we remember you in our prayers and look forward to sharing more encounters with Canadian saints and travel angels who inspire and encourage the best in us and others in the human family.

Grace & peace, Mark & Jan