

Testimonies From Our Seniors



Bob & Helen Anderson

"We have had many experiences in our lifetime that have given us pause to reflect on God's wisdom as He has guided us through these events. One of the most memorable events was the way our future plans were 'shattered' by the Bombing of Pearl Harbor."

At the time of the attack Bob was in the service and was engaged to Helen. Suddenly their lives were filled with uncertainty. They got married before Bob went overseas, and then Helen moved in with her parents. During these 4 long years, they learned to rely on God and trust in Him as never before. His love and provision for them were evident in many ways, and God became very real to them. Their faith grew, and their love for one another blossomed. They both agreed that through this difficult beginning, God bound their hearts together in a special way. They have now had 64 happy years together, and God still continues to build their faith.

When asked how they were sustained through this experience, Bob and Helen replied, "Of paramount importance was making sure we felt God's nearness through constant daily prayer. Life was never promised to be 'a bed of roses' but rather an opportunity to make the best of every situation."

They shared that through the years, one of the most important and practical ways they have kept their eyes fixed on Jesus has been to start each new day with morning devotions. "Through reading the scriptures and reflecting on their meaning, a new perspective can be gained for each opportunity that comes our way."

Janet Whitehead

"After being healthy most of my life, thanks to the Lord, in early 2007 I found out that I had Cushing's disease. When it began, I got very sick and couldn't walk, stand or get in and out of bed. Initially we didn't know what was wrong. I asked the Lord to help me because I knew I was unable to do this alone. My faith is strong, but I did get discouraged a few times. I wasn't sure what the Lord had in mind with this trial.

Through everything, my family has been very supportive. My eldest daughter, Sara, quit her job last December and has been able to be with me daily since that time. I can see now that this was part of God's plan." Janet gives the glory to God for her progress. Thanks to the works of His hand, her rehab has recently included practice getting in and out of the car in preparation for her long awaited trip home.

"This experience with the Cushing's disease has been really difficult, but my God is a strong and awesome God who is full of love and compassion for His own."



Small Groups Around the Corner!

Jennifer and I have been involved in small groups for several years, both participating and leading groups at our previous churches. In fact, we met each other in a friend's living room during a small group in September 2001, and we were married two years later.

After the birth of our first child, Luke, Jennifer became involved in MOPS at First Free Church, and we both loved the church so much that we decided to start attending First Free Church later that year. We became members in November of 2005.

When Jennifer was pregnant with our second child, we discussed the idea of starting a small group at First Free because we missed being in a small group, but because of the pregnancy and the thought of a newborn in the house with a two-year old, we decided to put that thought on hold. We considered that maybe we would approach Pastor Joel in a year or so when the baby got a little older to see what he thought of starting some small groups.

This year Pastor Joel called us in January and asked us to help lead the small group ministry at First Free. We were both excited and enthusiastic about this opportunity. He didn't just want us to lead a group; he wanted us to help start up the ministry for the entire church!

Brian, Jennifer & Family



This past February, we had the opportunity to travel to Saddleback Church in Southern California for a Small Group Conference with Pastor Joel and Eric and their wives Becky and Erica. We attended three days of conferences on many topics such as, starting small groups at your church for the first time, handling issues with childcare, and creating different types of groups to include the members of the congregation. The conference not only taught us the fundamentals of connecting people, but it helped us to realize how important small groups are for all members of the church. Members of a small group worship together, disciple each other, study the Word together, reach out to others (spread the Good News), and form close friendships with each other. Small groups fulfill that God-given longing each of us has for community.

In April of this year, we took some of the concepts that we learned from the conference and started a small group for new-comers to First Free. We studied the Purpose Driven Life for six weeks - meeting at our home once a week.

Many of the current members at church have expressed to us their enthusiasm to be in a small group too. We are very excited to be a part of this ministry and for the beginning of new small groups in the fall of '07.