

Church Beyond Walls

By Andre' Provost



William

My baptism was the start on a road with God; a path of being clean and sober; a different way, a way of living with Christ in my life. Attending church has made my mind and heart stronger."

In 1985, things were looking up for twenty year old Will. An invitation to join his dad at Wellons on Fruit Valley Road brought him to Vancouver from San Diego. Within a short time he had a girlfriend. This led to a son and eight years living together. Even though Will had a good job, had reunited with his dad, and was raising a new family; he still felt pain. During his childhood his parents divorced, he was raped, and he witnessed his mother's boyfriend's suicide. Then in 1993, he learned that his brother was dying of AIDS, his mom of cirrhosis of the liver, and that his girlfriend was having an affair. To numb his pain, Will turned to alcohol and Vicodin which soon led to meth and heroin.

His addictions took over his life. In 1997, Will lost his apartment, his job, and custody of his child. He became homeless, drifting between sleeping on the streets, to shelters and couches of friends. Every time he tried to

"kick the habit" he found himself on an emotional roller coaster. He says, "One minute a nice person and then the next a raging lunatic." This eventually led to an eight month jail sentence. Leaving jail in 2001, Will received a psychological evaluation. There, he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which paved the way to get on SSI and into the Share Aspire housing program. These programs kept Will off the streets; but he still needed help with his meth addiction. Soon health problems followed. Diabetes and a heart attack in 2009 scared Will into making numerous attempts to kick the habit, only to relapse again and again.

In January 2015, Erin, a believer from Will's apartment complex, brought Will to church and to the Friends of the Carpenter day shelter. At that point, Will had six months clean and sober. One day, I felt an urge from the Holy Spirit to talk to him about his spiritual journey using a spir-

itual journey interview tool. Will considered himself an assertive searcher. He noted that his past was holding him back from finding God. I showed him in scriptures where others with bad pasts had found a cleansing and a new life through Christ. Will was excited and chose to get baptized that day. He says, "My baptism was the start on a road with God; a path of being clean and sober; a different way, a way of living with Christ in my life. Attending church has made my mind and heart stronger." Will did relapse on March 14th, but it only lasted two days instead of the months as in the past. He said, "It wasn't the same as before. I was now connected with Christ and He was telling me to stop." Will renewed his commitment over communion surrounded by believing friends in the Center's prayer room. Please pray for Will and the many others like him who we are helping grow in their spiritual journeys at the Center. Thank you for your prayers and support that makes this possible.

FAITH
FOOD
FITNESS
FOCUS
FRIENDS

THE DANIEL PLAN

Daniel Plan Class

40 Days to a Healthier Life Wednesdays, 5—6 pm Friendship Center

Join us for a 6-week series called The Daniel Plan – 40 Days to a Healthier Life. This is a groundbreaking approach to achieving a healthy lifestyle that is both transformational and sustainable. The Daniel Plan is centered on five essentials that will guarantee your success: faith, food, fitness, focus, and friends. So are you ready to revolutionize your health once and for all? Starting April 1, we will gather every Wednesday.

COME WALK THE RED CARPET
To Honor Volunteers

SHINE LIKE THE STARS...VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

*We thank God for you and for the many ways you
shine among us*

Thursday the 16th day of April, 2015
7:00 pm
The Friendship Center

Please RSVP by April 10, 2015
360-750-4752
or Bernie@friendsofthecarpenter.org

April Volunteer Spotlight

The soft-spoken, sandy-haired young man leading the Friendship Center's worship services on the first Wednesday each month is Rev. Josh Rowley of Vancouver First Presbyterian Church. Pastor Josh has led the FPC congregation since April 2013, and one of the church's first outreach activities he was introduced to--- during his interview process--- was Friends of the Carpenter.

Earlier in his ministry he had helped start a program for the homeless in Redwood City, Calif., and like Friends, he has a heart for the poor and those who live outside. After his visit to the Friendship Center he said, "I knew

I wanted to be involved."

"I was very impressed with Duane (Sich)'s vision and passion. The program is suited for homeless service in the Northwest, giving them a warm, dry place to be. I love the vision, its simplicity, and its pertinence to our area, weather and climate."

Referring to his volunteering on those first Wednesdays, Josh said, "I'm sure I'm fed by it as much as anything I may say to them. I learn a lot from the people there. They share a different, unique perspective than those of us who live inside a nice house. I've felt a sense of God's Spirit at work, and I am committed to it."

Outside of his busy ministry,

Josh spends time with his active family: wife, Amy, and tweens Sydney and Aidan.

