

**BETHANY PIONEER VILLAGE INC.**  
**Annual General Meeting – November 13, 2022**

**Board Chair Report**

It was a Thursday in April; April 12th, 1956, and it turned out to be a very good day for a group of men with an idea. For weeks and months leading up to that day they had been travelling miles of gravel roads seeking financial support for their proposal. Critics and scoffers were plentiful. Their leader said, "Have faith, the Lord will provide". And slowly but surely that skepticism was replaced with "How can I help?". And help they did, by purchasing shares at \$1 each. Weeks and months and hundreds of gravel-road miles later 20,000 shares had been sold. Next came trips to Regina to meet with politicians to persuade them that their proposed project qualified for 20% capital funding from the government. Again, their leader said to the skeptics, "Have faith, the Lord will provide." And, yes, after a visit to Middle Lake by the Ministry in charge, the government gave the project their go-ahead.

And so, on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1956 the 120-acre homestead of Marcus and Elizabeth Struck was purchased for \$6,500 and, by April 25<sup>th</sup>, a Certificate of Incorporation from the Government of Saskatchewan was signed, sealed and delivered. Thus began the faith-based journey of Bethany Pioneer Village.

Who were these men? And how were they able to, in 1956, persuade farmers, villagers and small-town community members throughout the prairie provinces to purchase \$20,000 worth of shares for a project that was still just an idea? The leader was Pastor Karl Krahenbil and his three-member Executive Board, Art Hoeflicher from Middle Lake and Pastor Stanley Rosenau and Marvin Naber from Melfort. I have to wonder how often these men must have thought of these words from Mark 10:27 as they drove through yet another snow-storm, changed another flat tire and carried on down the road – "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Here we are now, 66 years later - we can look around Bethany's 120-acres and see with our own eyes what God made possible. For 66 years He has brought to Bethany hundreds of men and women of faith – some needed care and some were their caregivers. Over its 66-year history Bethany's Board members, administrators and staff have persevered through many challenges and it seems the Lord was always ready to supply Bethany with exactly what was needed. Bethany has been blessed and continues to be blessed.

Today, Bethany, along with every health-care organization in the province, is facing unprecedented external challenges. By external, I mean, challenges that are outside of our control.

## 1. Staffing

In a recent poll of 1,500 nurses by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, 83% reported vacancies in their workplaces. Thankfully, Bethany is fortunate to be one of the 17% with no vacant nursing positions. In Saskatoon alone, there are 80 to 150 vacant shifts on any given day. All of this is a result of a dramatic shift in workforce availability.

## 2. Available Long-Term-Care Beds

In recent years the number of Long-Term-Care beds in Saskatchewan have decreased while the demand has increased. Health-care administrators are looking at a flow of Government initiatives that are not aligned with current health-care issues. Individuals in their 40's, 50's, 60's are entering Long-Term-Care with a variety of diseases, some needing complex health care. The needs of these individuals combined with the needs of seniors in our rural communities for Long-Term-Care has reached a crisis point.

I had a conversation recently with Raeleen Hulan, the Regional Director of Care overseeing the South-East 1 and 2 region, which includes Humboldt, Watson, Watrous, Imperial, Strasbourg, Lanigan and Middle Lake. I asked for her perspective on the most pressing issues for rural Long-Term-Care:

#1. The recruitment and retention of qualified staff across the board in every area of health care

- e.g. blood work, physical therapy, home care, food services, CCA's, nursing, x-ray technicians, laundry, housekeeping.....

There are not enough people to fill the mounting vacancies. A high percentage of recruitment will be coming from immigration – but, every initiative that is being developed right now will not begin to make a difference for at least 2 more years. All that can be done today is to keep adapting and changing and creating back-up plans for worst case scenarios. That is why families are seeing their loved ones placed in Long-Term-Care in locations that can be anywhere up to 150 kilometers from their preferred location.

It is a constant balancing act between having enough staff and having enough beds.

Raeleen had recently visited Bethany as she had accompanied the Ministry of Health visitors during their 2-day audit of Bethany. She shared with me what their observations were:

- Bethany's standards are very high and are setting the bar high for others in the province, which she explained, is one of the reasons why Bethany does not have vacant positions. Work environment matters to quality staff.
- SHA policies, procedures and guidelines are being followed and resident centered care is evident

- She said they observed residents as happy, up and dressed, sharing events between Aspen and Birch and that they were particularly impressed with the community involvement that they witnessed.
- The fact that Bethany sits in the middle of a park-like environment with acres of space, trails and beautiful well-kept grounds was amazing to all three in the group. And, while they were there, they walked the trail behind Aspen.

I told Raeleen that I would be sharing her perspective with you at this AGM. I believe every one in this room would agree that Bethany has a history with a good reputation, that includes Board members, administrators and staff that have been committed and dedicated. And that continues to this day. But there are realities that have to be faced right now, there are improvements that need to be made and areas that need to be strengthened. But most important is the gathering of information so that informed decisions can be made for Bethany's direction now and in the future.

That means, members, that we want all of you to be part of this information gathering by participating in a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is an in-depth look at Bethany's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. In a series of meetings, the Board will be inviting Bethany members, staff members, family members and residents (those that can) to give in-put during this process. It is a structured process for gathering information that is used by many non-profit organizations, businesses and corporations. It has proven to be effective in developing short-term and long-term strategies. It gives everyone participating a chance to be heard and during the process gives everyone a better understanding of how Bethany works and how varied perspectives and view-points can actually work together. The more varied the insights, the better the results will be. The more diverse the groups, the better the insights we will generate. You will receive more information on the SWOT analysis and how you can participate once the SWOT process details are finalized.

My prayer is that this SWOT process be an awakening for everyone involved. That we learn from each other and together see new possibilities that will ensure Bethany's ability to continue its mission to Glorify God by providing a welcoming Christian environment and a caring staff to nurture those in need of physical, personal and spiritual support. I take comfort in the words of Jeremiah 29:11 – "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Sharon Carter  
Bethany Board Chair