

The Robelen Report

June 1, 2019

Dear prayer partners and supporting churches,

Greetings again from a very busy battlefield! Things have been going crazy here since the last update. I have finally found a little time to update y'all so that you can pray for us more informed.

Our health continues to be one front in the Devil's assault against us, though we have seen definite improvements at least in the last couple of weeks. Betsy has greatly recovered from the problems caused by kidney stones in March, although we are still waiting to hear what may have caused such a problem; Lord-willing, we'll hear that at the next appointment on Wednesday. Her right lung seems healed, but her left lung is still sore and sensitive from collapsing and filling with fluid, but it is slowly getting better. Her back is also finally showing signs of recovering from the rear-end collision in February; after we bought a TENS unit like the chiropractor uses and started using it, her back is more or less in alignment most of the time. It still goes out easily, though, and limits what she is able to do. We would appreciate your prayers that she would soon fully recover from both of those issues.

Since the last prayer letter, we found out that the digestive problems that I was having were due to my gallbladder going bad. I was having gallstone attacks, and they became quite severe and my gallbladder became infected. I ended up having my gallbladder removed (it wasn't technically emergency surgery, but it was rushed within 24 hours of a ER visit) on the 9th, and I am now doing much better. The same tests that revealed the problem with my gallbladder showed that my liver is enlarged; we are now waiting to hear back from tests about what is causing that and how severe it is. We would appreciate your prayers that the liver issue is minor and that it won't require serious intervention. Please also be praying that we could have all of these health issues resolved soon, so that they won't keep taking so much time; we are averaging a day and a half a week on doctors right now!

The vehicles have continued to be another front in this assault. The van brakes have gotten bad enough that we are unable to use it until we can afford to get it repaired. We have been using my car to make two trips to pick people up in its absence, but even that almost couldn't happen last weekend; the car began failing to start intermittently on Tuesday, and by Thursday

it almost wouldn't start at all, nearly stranding us in Richmond on a day when we had two doctor's appointments! After a day and a half of working on it, by God's grace, we were able to track down and replace the faulty starter relay. That means that we can use it again, but still are limited, since it is also intermittently heating up when stopped like at a traffic light or when stuck in traffic. Please pray that we can soon have both our personal car and the church van operating reliably.

In spite of all the opposition and attacks, the work of the ministry goes forward (although more slowly than we would like, to our great frustration). The first weekend in May brings the Heart of Virginia Festival to Farmville, a street fair which draws thousands of people to downtown Farmville. We paused our regular door-knocking on that Saturday morning and passed out several hundred brochures for our church. For the first time, one of the event organizers told us that we were not allowed to be handing out the brochures, but by God's grace, we were able to resolve it amiably and continue, even making a few positive seeming connections.

The food pantry outreach is beginning to show signs of coming fruit now. This week, one lady to whom we have given food several times came into the church to see what clothing we had in the clothes closet, and says that she intends to come to church on Sunday. We have also made two new contacts in the same apartment complex through the food pantry outreach and are looking forward to following up with them.

One new attendee reminds us of why we are in Farmville. Vicki recently moved to Farmville from Prince George, and asked her pastor to recommend three churches to visit and consider joining. Ours was the only one he could find to recommend, and she has come several times and indicates that she intends to keep coming.

We are also seeing some encouraging signs that some of the people who have drifted or been pulled away are close to returning to the church. One of the ladies who was pulled out dropped in on the church to cool off and chat after the Heart of Virginia Festival and says that she's planning to come back, another lady who left more recently dropped by with some donations and we had a good conversation that may have been a first step towards her returning, and Demetrius, the young man who I led to Christ a few months ago who then started drifting has been back for a couple of evenings and says that he's planning to come back too. Please pray that these who have drifted or been pulled out will return and allow us to help them grow and that all those who were pulled out by the one lady will return with their children and start growing again.

We would also appreciate prayers for the church finances. We need to pay rent this week and we are currently about 800 dollars short. This is in addition to other bills coming due and our need to repair the van. The people that God has helped us reach so far are generous, but they all live on very limited resources themselves.

We appreciate the support and all of the prayers that we receive and thank God for each

person who joins with us in our battle offering the “cover fire” of prayer for us. We especially appreciate it when we hear from those who are praying for us. Sometimes it is too easy for us to feel like we are out here alone.

We are thrilled that despite everything that the devil is throwing at us, we are seeing progress and growth in our ministry, We count it a blessing that like some of the early church, we are counted worthy to suffer for Jesus (though our suffering isn't coming through human hands, we recognize the same ultimate source behind it). We look forward to seeing the magnitude of the victory that God is preparing, knowing that our light afflictions are working a far greater weight of glory.

In Christ's Service

Paul Robelen

Praises:

Improvements in health
New contacts and visitors
Sign of some who left returning

Prayer Requests:

Health
Car and van to be repaired and reliable
Finances
Return of the lady who left and those she has pulled out