



Hi Friends,

If you are reading this, it's because you are in some way connected with the churches of Perth/Smiths Falls/Lanark County, and share our heart to see people in the community discover and grow closer, to Jesus.

First, allow me to briefly introduce myself...since I likely won't be physically visiting your 'church lobby' anytime soon.

- It's just me, Shannon Miller. Many of you, I already am blessed to know...others I will look forward to knowing better soon! I help out a little bit over here at Northgate with some of the behind-the-scenes details like emails and Facebook 'stuff'.
- I guess you could say I'm a 'lifer' in the area...having grown up just south of Smiths Falls and now residing with my husband Robert and our 4 children in Lombardy, where we operate a farm.
- I've known 'about' Jesus my whole life. I've known him 'personally' for about 20 years. The most exciting part though, is that within the last 5 to 10 years, I've JUST stepped into the journey of leaning who Jesus REALLY is...and what he REALLY thinks of me (*spoiler – it's NOT what I had thought of me, or what the enemy tries to tell me that Jesus thinks of me!*)

**** Warning...this message IS a bit 'lengthy', so feel free to flag it and save it for later...or if you have time right now, get comfy, grab your coffee and have a read...**

As you likely know, there has been a move afoot for several years now in the greater Perth area. Its premise is for the churches in the area who declare Jesus Christ as our risen Saviour, to join together and use our unity as an effective tool for reaching the community at large, pointing them to our Lord.

I know that when I was first introduced to that concept – nearly 15 years ago now – it felt strangely foreign... and shockingly refreshing! To hear a pastor stand up and pray by name, for the neighbouring churches who were proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus, down the street, across town, across the county...wow!! Cooperation and cohesion – rather than competition?? "Count us in!", we thought!!

Fast forward to today. After years of relationship building, pastors meeting together to pray and encourage each other, occasional joint events (prayer summits, worship evenings...), and continually seeking God's direction for each 'next step', the next step is here.

Not surprisingly, today's next step is a more structured online presence. (Thanks COVID, for the clarity!)

A website is being developed www.discoveringhope.ca which will be there to share with people the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15) and also to direct them to any of the participating churches in the area. (To be clear, it's not a comprehensive church directory and that fact is clearly stated on the site.)

On Monday, April 5th on Lake 88, we began a series of short radio ads spreading hope and letting people know about this online resource/community.

Speaking of online community, we have a Facebook page under the name '[Hope for Lanark County](#)'. THIS, in particular, is where we can use your help!! Read on for more on that...

What can you do?

- Pray – pray that people will have ears to hear those radio ads; that they will 'find' the Facebook page; that they will be compelled to visit the website and have open hearts and minds to take in exactly what they need in the moment that they are there...
- Pray for those who are drafting the website content; putting up the posts; responding to the messages and inquires; that we would be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and that God gets the glory!
- Follow, Share and contribute!! Regardless of your feelings about social media...it is here. Today, more than ever, people are spending a lot of time scrolling through it. We may as well do what we can to put positive things 'out there' in the midst of 'all of the rest of it'.
- If you ARE on Facebook, we would love it if you would like and follow "[Hope for Lanark County](#)." (*Not for the sake of 'numbers'...but for the simple fact that, the more people who are engaged with the page, the farther afield it will spread... ☺*)
- When you see a post there that you can relate to, go ahead and like it, comment on it, share it on your own page. Facebook is all about dialogue and community. It will be far more effective if we have people engaging with the posts, rather than just an endless stream of content.

Speaking of 'content'...

You are welcome, and encouraged to contribute to that... please!!

Maybe it will help to picture the Facebook page as the virtual version of the 'church lobby.' The first impression people get when they decide to 'check out' our churches.

It's the place where we begin to build those relationships...the relationships which will lead to us 'going deeper' and sharing that hope.

Is it welcoming... non-threatening? Are there friendly faces without fear of judgement? Does it make people feel comfortable enough to take the next step...into the sanctuary (*...perhaps on to the website...and then from there to each church's website...*) and have a seat?

Or do they begin to question whether they even belong there, and want to turn around leave?

It's all about hope.

When you come across something that speaks to you, send it on over. It could be a song, a verse, a personal anecdote or recounting of one of those "God moments" that you've experienced. Maybe a podcast you're heard, a book you've read, or a quote that stuck with you...

A couple of ways to do that:

- send it via Facebook messenger to the '[Hope for Lanark County](#)' page (not to be confused with 'Pray for Lanark County' which also exists.)

- email it directly to me (Shannon Miller) at northgateministryinfo@gmail.com

Thanks in advance!! (And I should also note...don't be offended or discouraged if you don't see your item posted immediately. It would be great to be able to assemble a bit of a 'reserve' of content to draw from over time...keeping the flow of posts somewhat consistent, yet varied and interesting...if that makes sense!)

We'll keep in touch going forward with updates, prayer requests and praise reports too!!
...and I promise that the next emails will NOT be this LONG!!

Okay...that's it for today! Thanks for reading the whole way through. ☺

I'm so excited to see God move through this new venture that we are embarking on together...the family of Christ and the whole community...in Lanark County...one of Discovering Hope. <3