

## Monthly Support Report

December 31, 2017

Dear elders,

I'll state the obvious. Another year has passed. 2017 is now history. Happy New Year to all of you. It is my prayer that 2017 has been a positive year for all of you and that the positives have outweighed the negatives. From my perspective it's been a pretty good year.

It's been a short month and there hasn't been too much going on with lots of folks going in and out of town (including myself and my family), so this may be a rather short report. I hope you don't remind. A short report but with a lot of our members it's been a rather difficult month. I'll try to briefly explain why.

One of our members has had her cancer return. This is the third time. So, she has returned to her chemo treatments. Fortunately for her, the chemo hasn't been as bothersome this time as they were the last time. That's a blessing. The past two times the chemo treatments were very rough and very hard on her. This time however, according to her husband she was stronger and much better prepared. She had her more recent treatment on the 26<sup>th</sup>. She also has a Pet Scan coming up on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January of the new year, and this scan will tell her how the chemo is doing. We're prayer and hopeful that good is coming from these treatments. I know it's early, but her doctor is already hopeful.

Another member has Advancing Rheumatoid Arthritis which causes her chronic pain. She is also taking treatments for this. Her injections are not only painful, and time consuming, but they also weaken her immune system. As if that's not bad enough in and of itself. She is a school teacher, and she can't afford to take off of work. Which means she must go back to work within a day or so after receiving her injection. And, her injection comes with additional side effects. Plus, it will never cure her, it will only make her pain more tolerable if it does what it's supposed to do.

I'm telling you about these two sisters in Christ so that you will remember them in your prayers. I know that you will, and they would very much appreciate your prayers. At times like this, other than the medicines they are receiving, prayer is so very important. And when I can tell them that many other Christians in other places are praying for them, that greatly lifts their spirits. So, please let me thank you ahead of time for your taking the time to remember these two faithful Christians in your prayers.

The work here continues to go well. My assessment is, 2017 has been a very positive year for this congregation. We have grown in number. And to a degree, that's always a positive thing to be able to say. I think all of us always look an increase in numbers as a positive sign of growth in a local congregation of the Lord's people. But, the greatest growth we've had has been the spiritual growth we've continued to experience throughout the year. That's become more and

more evident as we have come to the close of 2017. Please allow me a few moments to outline some of the highlights of our growth spiritually by telling you about some of the work that continues to take place.

The young woman that I baptized a few months ago continues to grow in her knowledge of the Lord and you can see her growth spiritually. I study with her and my wife also has a separate study with her. Although she was raised in a religious family and attended “church services” while growing up on a semi-regular basis, it’s been like starting at the very beginning with her Bible knowledge. In some ways that’s been a blessing because there hasn’t been very much at all from her past that we’ve had to deal with religiously speaking that needed to be explained away. She continues to be very receptive to the truth of the gospel. It’s a study that’s been very refreshing. Right now, she is visiting with her mother for the holidays, and what I’m hopeful of is that she is planting seeds while she is away. While her mother is 3-hours away, it would be great to have the opportunity to teach her about the Lord. That’s something I’ll pray about.

There are also a couple of our members that I’m having to counsel due to things that are taking place in their lives, unrelated to each other. I’ll not get into details other than to say, I’m happy to have the opportunity to do so. I’m happy that in the case of one individual that there was the trust that they were willing to come to me and trust me to help them through this time and this issue they are struggling with. And in the other instance, I’m thankful that they were so receptive when I approached them that they weren’t upset with me when I approached me and trusted that I was just trying to help them turn their lives around. I’ve always said that we’ve had a rather close group of Christians, and it’s times like this that prove me right. Both of these separate instances could have taken different turns. But, they didn’t because hearts are still tender and there is a willingness to do what is right and well pleasing in the sight of God. If we can continue to cultivate good and honest hearts that are receptive to the truth, then we are doing something that’s right I suppose. And, God’s word is still God’s power unto salvation.

Well, that’s about all of the news for now. Thanks for reading. And, thanks for your prayers and for your fellowship in the Gospel. Happy New Year!

God bless.

Randy