

S P R I N G 2 0 0 9

McMullen News

We Made It!

March 13 marked our two-month anniversary in Vancouver, British Columbia. It seems like so much has happened in such a short time. Our move went well enough, besides losing some keys down an elevator shaft! We are very happy to be here after a long road of preparation.

Our first few months are focused on getting adjusted. Even though we are less than an hour from the U.S. border, we have indeed left our homeland. Each week we discover at least a little something new, something unexpected. For all their similarities, Canada and the U.S. are different countries after all. Not to mention our neighborhood (check out Vancouver's "The Drive" neighborhood, www.thedrive.ca, to get a feel--we did not check the entire site for content), which has a personality of its own.

Each week is different, but they almost always include: a Sunday night gathering to eat, pray, and praise God; a Wednesday "staff" meeting; time out in the community; trying to meet new people; our Life Group meetings; a marriage class that Aaron and Amy are facilitating; Paul working a few hours at Starbucks; and exploring various churches or community places on Sunday mornings.

It's not easy to explain exactly what it's like to be here. Much of it is the normal routine of life: grocery shopping, paying bills, working through to do lists. But the twist is that we are trying to live each day as a mission. The mission we are a part of is just beginning. It's a dream of a community of people, being a living blessing to our neighborhoods in the name of Jesus. We are about making connections with people, trying to find that next step together on our journey towards God.

A request to those of you reading, please continue to pray, and thank you to those who have been remembering us in prayer. One thing we are wondering about is whom God will provide to serve and provide various forms of leadership for the Vine in upcoming years. Maybe you are in conversation with someone looking for a next step in life; or maybe you are feeling a push towards something new--a new ministry to be a part of. May God work in your prayers to open some doors for more harvest-workers in Vancouver.



Community Clean Up and Picnic

Having just arrived in Vancouver, we had the opportunity to host one of Harding's Spring Break campaign groups for one day out of their week-long mission trip to Vancouver. So we looked for the chance to serve our community, and God provided with a "clean-up" day sponsored by several organizations from The Drive's community.

We framed the event as our first public activity associated with The Vine. This was a way for the community to learn what we are about and see our hearts in action. It was a chance for many people to see Christians doing something positive with no strings attached. The students did an incredible job with the clean-up, picking up 40 bags of trash in a little over three hours. People interested in who we are and what we were doing received an invitation to a neighborhood picnic that we hosted on March 21st.

The best part for us was building relationships with the events' sponsors, the Community Policing Center and The Drive's Business Association. Aaron shared one of our picnic invitations with the Business Association director and she liked the idea enough to send it out via email to the 400 businesses in the association! We are hoping to partner with both of these groups in the future to serve our community.

Last Saturday we claimed the pavilion area at Trout Lake Park and hosted our first community picnic. Several of our friends from various churches came to help out and we ended up serving somewhere around 50 meals. It was a rich time to get to know people in our neighborhood and several people commented, "This is great! No one ever does this sort of thing!" Many good conversations took place and at least twenty people left with information about The Vine church plant. We felt encouraged when it was all said and done, especially since we had no idea how many people would actually show up! Praise God for both of these events.



What's in a Name?

It's not often that we get to officially name something. Well, maybe we do while writing papers during school, but after that it's pretty much limited to kids, pets, and blogspots. It has always seemed rather intimidating to me to name something important. What if I don't like the name after a year or even a week? What if no one else likes the name? At the same time, it's an exciting creative act to be a part of.

We prayerfully considered a name for the church we are planting for about a month's time. It was a collaborative effort between Julie and I and the Etheridge's. Many names made the list—one survived.

In John 15, Jesus talks to his disciples using an image of himself and those who would follow him. "I am the vine and you are the branches...If anyone remains in me and my words remain in him, he will bear much fruit...Apart from me you can do nothing." These are some of Jesus' words from this section of Scripture. Vines are growing things. They can be wild and out of control, or they can be pruned and well-kept. Jesus speaks of pruning the branches of the vine—that would be us who follow him. We liked this image of something organic, which grows and produces fruit. We liked the connection it brings to Jesus, and the teaching that came with this image. Those that we shared this name with responded positively. It fits our organic (some call it "granola") neighborhood. It might actually evoke some interest, and it definitely brings to mind something that's dynamic rather than static.

These are most of the reasons why we choose the name, The Vine: a church of Christ, to represent the church that God is planting through us. Our hope is that it will continually inspire us to be connected to Jesus, to grow, to willingly be pruned, and to bear fruit.

New Address & Numbers

U.S. Address

P.O. Box 1319
Blaine, WA 98231-1319

Canadian Address

#312 - 1707 Charles St.
Vancouver, BC V5L 2T6
Canada

New Numbers

Paul: 778-823-2225
Julie: 778-823-2224

Email

pemcmullen@gmail.com
juliekcmullen@yahoo.com

