

LOCAL PASTOR GIVES AWAY \$\$\$ SAYING, "DO SOMETHING!"

On the last Sunday in February, Pastor Mark Holmen from The Log Church in Crosslake, asked 50 people to volunteer for a "kingdom assignment." He didn't tell them what that assignment was going to be, but if they wanted to be a part of it, they needed to come forward or respond using the chat on the livestream. Once 50 people volunteered, he then reached into his pocket and pulled out a wad of \$100 bills and gave one to each person with the following challenge. "This is a free gift to you, that you did nothing to deserve. I now want you to go and "do something" with it for God before Easter and then send me your story." This challenge was in response to the message he had given based in the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. "I don't want you to simply hear the message today, I want you to "do something" in response to today's message." He then offered the same opportunity to everyone else who was in the service or watching online saying, "You can all participate in the challenge, but you will have to put in your own \$100. Now I know you wished you volunteered, right?"

Here are some of the stories that came in...

#1

I was driving to work on a Friday and decided to pull into Caribou Coffee for a specialty drink. On the way there I noticed a woman with a bedroll loosely draped over her. She was obviously homeless and I felt compelled by God to DO SOMETHING. I pulled into the parking spot and I noticed she had sat down on the pavement right by the entrance to the coffee shop. I knew this was a God thing so I went up to her and asked if she wanted a cup of coffee. She said "yes" so I walked in and bought her a coffee. When I exited the shop, I handed her the coffee and asked her what her story was. She said she was staying at a church as her sleeping quarters and that she just left today because she had reached her time limit for staying there. I told her the reason I bought her the coffee was because we had learned a few weeks ago about the parable of the talents and that I felt that God had urged me to help her. She said she loved that story and said, "God bless you." I am happy to know that she knew that story. Obviously, she had learned or known about God in her previous experiences.

What I learned is that while I had money to give her, the greatest gift was what God gave me a compassionate heart for someone I didn't know. It's easy to pass judgement quickly on someone for their situation at hand, but God taught me to obey and to obey quickly without question.

#2

I have decided that I want my focus to be on the youth and growing their faith in God. As a very immature 17-year-old, I was fortunate enough to be invited on a canoe trip through Bethany Fellowship in Bloomington, Minnesota. All I knew was they were going to the Boundary Waters and I wanted to go with ... Fast forward over forty years and I can't even IMAGINE what my life would have been like without my acceptance of Christ in my life on that canoe trip. It saddens me that the decline of people (specifically young people) who live without faith. If I could help even just one young person to grow their life following God's teachings and bible studies, that would be such an awesome thing. My life has been enriched by my faith and has helped me in my darkest days. SOOOOO ... I will I make my \$100 grow by personally matching it so that some young person can go to camp!

#3

We received \$100 and matched it with another \$200, total \$300 and made a donation to the Pine River-Backus Family Center. They have many programs to help out local families.

#4

Pastor Mark, I was amazed with your "out-of-box" message and request for volunteers on Sunday 2/28/21! Wow, how cool was that!?! I have always struggled with Matthew 25 14-30, wondering truly what the Master desires us to do with possessions He entrusts us with! To give or to invest, and give back more? I can only say the request for volunteers to do a "kingdom assignment" was remarkable! I am glad your Elders agreed! I know this event has stirred tremendous discussions in our family, but, it has also had an impact on my reflections on the Word. I invested the 100 bucks in the great "gambling casino" called the stock market, and to date it has gained 800 percent. I sent in a "gift" for \$800 to the benevolence fund this evening.

#5

Hi Pastor Mark. I just wanted to share with you what I did with the money I was given about a month ago. Right away, after being given the money, I kept hearing God speak to me about a certain individual. I work in healthcare and it was someone that I had seen on a fairly regular basis. She was someone who had been broken from her addiction and her health is still failing as we speak. She is estranged from her husband and cannot work due to her health. In a nutshell, she has been plagued with struggles in her life, and many are undeniably due to the choices she has made. I know she needs the hope that only Jesus can offer. So, I wrote her a short little card explaining why I was giving this to her and telling her how much Jesus loves her. I have been praying for God to toughen her heart and to reach out and save her as I don't know how much time she has left. I have not spoken with her again but hope to this next week. I will keep you posted.

#6

I matched the money, doubling it and did two challenges. A good friend of mine has a family member that was diagnosed with a brain tumor I gave them \$100 to help out during this difficult time, I also volunteered at the soup kitchen in Brainerd. While I was there to spread my money, we randomly gave 20 people \$5 to go with their food pickup. Because of the pandemic, the soup kitchen hands out bags of food instead of serving meals.

#7

We were led to give our \$100 to missionaries in Mexico. We believe this is very fertile ground to sow into. About 40 years ago they went to Mexico and started a small church. In the beginning they met in home churches. Today they have over 2000 members, a Bible school, 12 missionary churches in Victoria, 50 or more around Mexico, and even some in the US. They also support an orphanage in the Philippines. They have a TV channel and produce videos. While shut down during the pandemic they continued broadcasting the services live and reached many more people. The congregation and the students are out on the streets witnessing and reaching many more for Jesus. Thank you for the opportunity to give more to this ministry.

#8

I was waiting for the most amazing opportunity ... something crazy insanely impactful...and then I heard God say, "Look around you are in your own mission field". I have a friend going thru a tough divorce! It has hurt her and her daughters financially and emotionally! I have often invited the oldest daughter to come to youth group with us, but her dad won't allow it! God placed the hearts of my friend and her two daughters on my heart! I knew they had a Bible, so I went and bought three devotional books...one picked uniquely for each of them! Hoping to help with the emotional void! Also, a letter saying I can't understand the hurt or pain, but I know someone who can!

I won't stop inviting them to church...but right now I know God has me in their lives...I am the church for them now! Financially she is struggling so I also added a \$50 grocery store gift card! I am not done just because the \$\$ is spent! This challenge has encouraged me to watch and listen for more ways to be the church in our community and friend groups!!!

#9

I work with a small group of people in Charleston, South Carolina. Most of them are over 65 years old and retired. I work with a few who are disabled. I've spent some time with each of them recently via Zoom. They each told their story and many of them are struggling either physically, mentally/emotionally or financially. A few are caregivers to their loved ones and that stress is taking a toll on them.

My husband and I decided to take the challenge and do something special for these people. So, we took the \$100 and multiplied it. We sent a \$50 Honey Baked Ham Company gift card to each of them so they could share an Easter ham, side dish or dessert with their family. We've already received notes on how they are going to use the gift card. We feel so blessed. We had the honor to share our blessings with 15 people in Charleston, South Carolina so they could celebrate Easter with their families.

#10

I lead a hymn sign group at the Whitefish on the Lakes senior residences and while I can't sing well, I wanted to help a Log Church friend in Memory Care there. Although my friend is memory challenged, she can sing most hymns by memory and even the hard ones. On Thursday mornings we sing with about 9 residents on the first floor and then we go up to the Memory Care section and lead a group of about 12 residents. There. The memory unity prefers simpler hymns with large print. When I receive the \$100 challenge gift from Pastor Mark, I knew just what I wanted to do with it. I got on the computer and found several easier hymnals that looked like they would be just right. The total came to more than \$100 but one day I was walking in the gym with a friend, and I shared with her how I was going to use my \$100 but didn't tell her the total needed would be more than \$100. Without her knowing that she said, "if the total is more than \$100, I want to cover the extra." WOW! God took care of the problem! Also, two ladies in my Bible study said if I needed to order more books later, they wanted to help. It brings me to tears—the loving, caring people in our church. I thank God for taking an interest in every aspect of our lives.

A beloved and treasured member of The Log Church is a resident of the Whitefish complex in the specialized area of memory care. I have been delighted as every week she faithfully attends both presentations. (memory care and assisted living residents). During the program, she walked over to the electronic piano, sat down and began moving her hand across the keyboard and turned to report

the piano was not working! It was quickly turned on and she began a concert of twelve songs using both the new hymnal and the old. Her playing capabilities were as if she had never stopped over the years. The gift of her presentation was circulated throughout the complex. It was a true Easter Miracle!

#11

I was blessed to have the opportunity to utilize the \$100.00 given out by the church. Thank you!!! My story begins from the burden my heart carries for single parents. It began when my daughter became a single parent. I've watched my daughter's life raising two children, basically alone, without support money and what it would have been without parent support. There are so many more out there in the same situation. It breaks my heart!!! The majority of single parents, especially women, live at poverty level ... here in America!!! We were able to match the \$100.00 from The Log Church and give it to a single mom who was still raising two young children. Unfortunately, the gift was rejected and returned to the Church, but we did not let that discourage us as we know the Bible says there will be times when the work, we are doing for Jesus will be rejected. We simply asked Pastor Mark to find another single parent to bless with this gift which he was able to do. We feel blessed to be able to help a single parent with the gift we were given.

#12

We have felt called to support people dealing with hunger. At the same time, we also feel that God has called us to Pequot Lakes to be closer to our grandchildren and to be able to have a Kingdom impact on them. As our "Do Something" challenge, we found the Lakes Area Food Shelf that serves people in the Breezy, Ideal, Jenkins, Nisswa, Pequot areas. A \$1 donation to this organization enables them to buy up to \$10 of food items from Second Harvest Heartland North Central. We took our two oldest grandchildren (6 and 4 years) to the food shelf where the director explained to them what they do to help people experiencing food shortage. This had a direct impact on our granddaughter Keira (6) who made the connection that children from her school may be served by the food shelf. After that each child received the \$100 bills and handed the money over to the director. He was delighted and did not let us leave without giving some treats to the children.

#13

Who would've thought Jesus would use us along with the \$200 the church gave us to make a difference in a snowmobiler's life? And not only \$200 but that it turned into \$600-\$700?? Here's how Jesus used us to make a difference in his kingdom.

We went to dinner with friends and came upon 2 guys standing outside with sleds. We didn't think much of it, so we went in and ate dinner. The men came in and said they rented 3 sleds and had 1 of their own. Unfortunately, earlier in their ride 1 sled broke down so they dropped the 4th guy in the group off and told his son, nephew and brother to finish the ride and to meet at the restaurant. He was going to take his truck there later. ...This is where we met them.

As more time passed, the 4th guy finally came up with his son by sled. We wondered why he was by sled when he had the truck? Well, he followed his GPS which led him down all forest roads and he continued on his way until his truck overheated. He walked (3 miles) the remainder of the road until he gained cell service to have his son pick him up and bring him to the restaurant. The guy was just sick! How is he going to get his truck now stuck in snow, overheated on a forest road out at 7pm at night? A guy we know was also there to give the guy a number to call to have a groomer/tow come get him. He warned us that just the phone call is \$500 and then the price goes up from there. Our hearts were just sick for this man and his crew! We didn't have The Log Church cash upfront at the

time but we all tried to put our heads together to try and help this poor man but there wasn't much we could do. Eventually, the groomer tow came and got the man's truck out.

The story doesn't end there...the 4 men rode their sleds back and ... ANOTHER sled breaks down! Ugghhh. Our friends came across them late that night and offered to drive the men back to Grand Marais and that is how we got the rest of the story. Very grateful, they wanted to pay our friend for helping them, but he refused and insisted they pay it forward to someone else in need as that is what "we snowmobilers" just do for one another. What a terrible experience!

When we were driving home the next day, we both agreed we needed to help in some way and felt Jesus wanted us to give them the money The Log Church had for them. We multiplied the money along with an encouraging card informing him of Jesus's love for his church and people and to also not give up on the sport of snowmobiling :) SMILE We shared what we were doing with our friend (who also drove the men to Grand Marais), and he also sent the guy \$300!! When the man received the money, he replied stating he was overwhelmed by the generosity and could feel the love of others while he was up north aside from his stroke of back luck while there. He recalls that when he was a kid growing up in the cities, people always helped out and looked out for another and that that practice seems gone nowadays. He stated in his note that he will find a way somehow to pay it forward when he can :)

We are so thrilled that God used us to touch this man's life and his experience snowmobiling for his glory. We are also happy we didn't have the cash with us at the time as it was multiplied into so much more!! What a wonderful and loving God we serve! Was a fun and blessed experience—Thank you Pastor Mark and Elders of The Log Church!

#14

Pastor Mark - I am so thankful that I was moved to come on stage when you requested volunteers a few weeks back. This is not normally something I would do but The Log Church community made it an easy choice. I will admit I was a little shocked when you started handing out \$100 bills.

After you explained where the money was coming from and put trust in God's people, I knew exactly what I was going to do with the \$100 from the church. I went home and laid on the couch with a family member that did not make it on stage that day. I said a prayer to that family member and provided the \$100 to them. I informed the family member that I was going to take \$100 out of my wallet and gift an additional \$100.

After a few days had passed, I was informed the family member was going to buy as many Jesus calling daily devotionals as possible and provided the devotional to neighbors along with a list of the Lords promises. 12 Jesus calling books were purchased and distributed with lists of the Lords promises.

I carried the \$100 in my wallet for weeks until one day I was led to Firehouse Subs in Baxter. I walked in and requested a conversation with an employee. I asked if they would be interested in taking a \$100 and paying for as many meals as possible. I was informed they would use the funds in the drive thru. I told the employee if anyone asks any questions just inform the person it was from Lakes Area First Responders and Lakes Area Law Enforcement.

#15

I was one who volunteered for the unknown kingdom challenge/assignment put forth by Mark a few Sundays ago. Here is what I did with the \$100:

The week prior to the Sunday challenge, I had heard a very tragic story of a young family from the nearby Eagle Bend community through a coworker. He shared that the mother underwent brain surgery to correct a severe twitch in her eye that was causing face paralysis on New Year's Eve of 2020. The surgery went well and she was texting people shortly after it. Early the morning of January 2nd, she had a stroke on the left side of her brain. They then found swelling on the brain. Doctors removed part of her skull to relieve pressure. She was then sedated and put on a breathing tube. As of January 4th, she is opening her eyes a little and responding to medical staff by wiggling her left toes and giving a thumbs up. The swelling stopped and they were able to wean her from the sedation. They also attempted to remove her from the breathing tube, but she wasn't breathing well enough to leave it off. As of the last Caring Bridge post from Feb. 21st she was moved to Regency Hospital in Golden Valley to give her the correct therapy she needs and get her stronger. The post said, she was put in the ICU because the move caused much anxiety and stress, which is common in a hospital move. Stacie has still been heavily sedated but she is wanting to try and talk. Some words were fairly clear, but most were not. She was able to get out the words, 'I love you' to her family which made them all melt in a pool of tears. She and her husband have 4 beautiful teenage children. Her husband travels from their home in Eagle Bend to see her as much as he can. This money given to the family will most likely go towards paying for the many gas bills needed to make the trips back and forth to the hospital. I did decide to match the \$100 church gift with a personal contribution so it could go that much further.

We did share this donation which came from The Log Church members. Within a few days of sending this to the family, we received the attached thank you card from one of the children. While I didn't know this family at all, it was very rewarding to make this happen for a very good family experiencing such a tragic incident. I have been praying for this family and will continue to do so. I'm hopeful to get a positive update about their current situation soon.

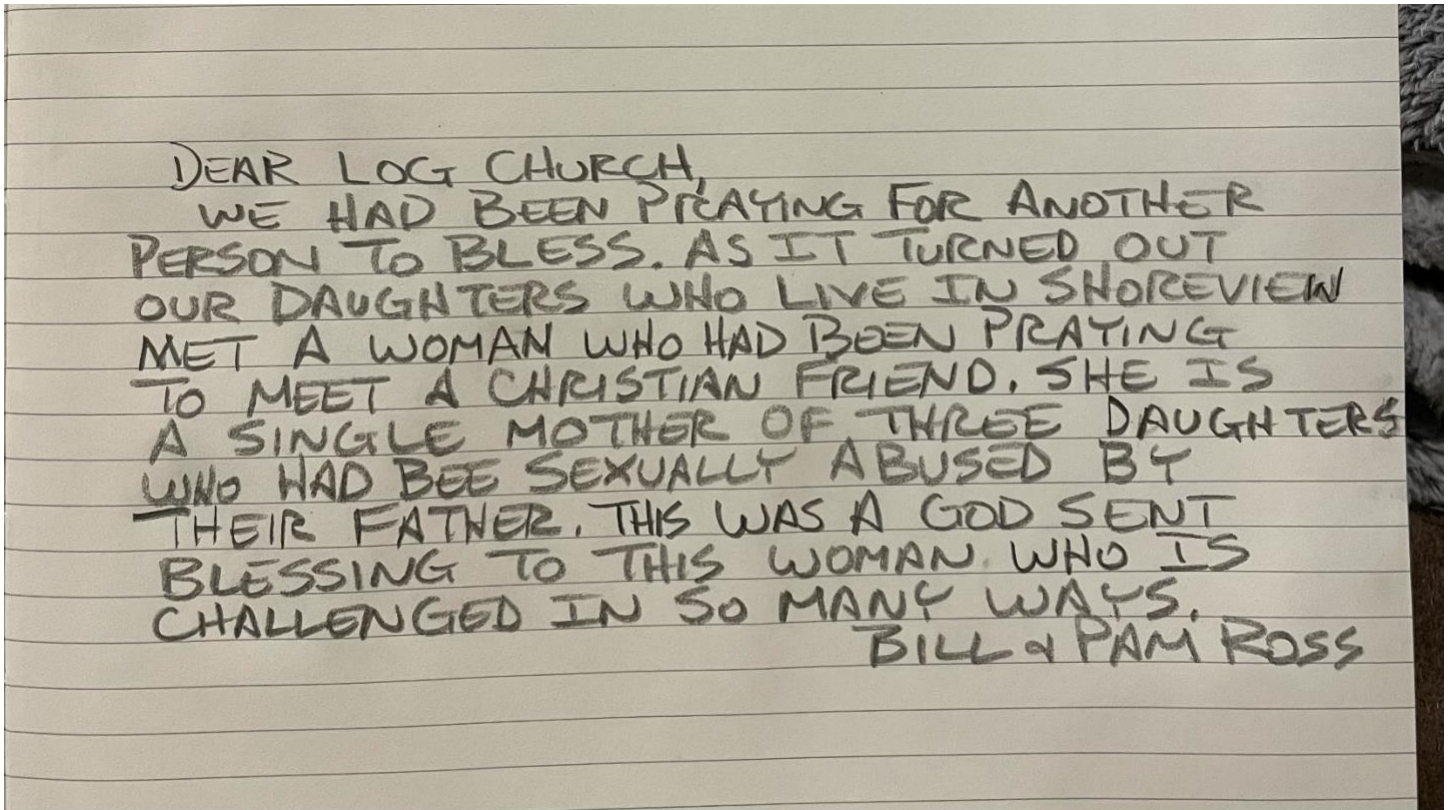
#16

As part of the challenge of using the \$100, I thought a lot about how can anyone spread the love of Jesus. I decided to break it up into 10 separate notes with a \$10 surprise and am placing them in stores in Crosby and Crosslake areas. Hopefully this will make somebody's day and bring a ray of sunshine on behalf of The Log Church. Here are the types of versions of the note (which I hand wrote) ...

You don't know me but here is \$10 for being at the right place at the right time! No gimmicks – it's just a gift that I hope brightens your day on behalf of The Log Church in Crosslake. I hope this encourages you today!! God Bless.

Romans 15:13 – May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

#17

A photograph of a handwritten note on lined paper. The text is written in all caps and is somewhat messy and slanted. The note is a message of blessing from the Log Church to a woman who has been sexually abused by her father. The signers are Bill and Pam Ross.

DEAR LOG CHURCH,
WE HAD BEEN PRAYING FOR ANOTHER
PERSON TO BLESS. AS IT TURNED OUT
OUR DAUGHTERS WHO LIVE IN SHOREVIEW
MET A WOMAN WHO HAD BEEN PRAYING
TO MEET A CHRISTIAN FRIEND. SHE IS
A SINGLE MOTHER OF THREE DAUGHTERS
WHO HAD BEE SEXUALLY ABUSED BY
THEIR FATHER. THIS WAS A GOD SENT
BLESSING TO THIS WOMAN WHO IS
CHALLENGED IN SO MANY WAYS.
BILL & PAM ROSS

#18

A couple of weeks after making the decision to participate, one of the individuals from the rescue organization that I have fostered dogs for reached out to ask if I would be willing to help a family out by watching their golden retriever for 2 weeks. The person who was supposed to do this had an unexpected family health emergency and they were unable to find any place that could take their dog as it was spring break time. I agreed to help out and was told that I would be paid \$500. Having Stella for those 2 weeks turned out to be such a blessing to me as she was such a wonderfully gentle and loving dog. Because I was blessed by her, I decided I would turn the \$500 I received into a blessing for others. Shortly after making this decision, you shared about the matching funds you had received for the new sound system for The Log Church. So, I am giving \$500 to that matching fund. The Log Church has blessed me so abundantly throughout the year as I have tuned in every week to hear the beautiful music and inspiring and wisdom-filled messages! So, through God's blessing to me, He turned my \$100 into \$500 - and then into \$1000 (thanks to the amazing matching fund gift). Thank you from the depths of my heart to you and everyone on staff at The Log Church who so richly bless us all.

#19

DEAR LOG CHURCH
RECENTLY DENNIS AND DANETTE CAME
TO OUR HOME TO PURCHASE A VINTAGE
RADIAL ARM SAW. THEY WERE FRIENDS AND
DENNIS WAS GOING TO DRIVE DANETTE TO
BEMIDJI TO START WORK ON THE PIPE LINE
IN OUR HOUSE DANETTE COMMENTED ON
OUR LARGE LOG CROSS. A CONVERSATION
ENSUED AND IT WAS CLEAR SHE HAD
FALLEN ON TOUGH TIMES: A DIVORCE,
AND LOSS OF HER BUSINESS DUE TO
COVID. WE BLESSED HER WITH A CARD
WITH SCRIPTURE AND \$100.00.
BILL & PAM ROSS

#20

Over the last few weeks, we have been praying for God to show us what to do with the money...several ideas came up on where or who might be a good recipient, but nothing spoke to our hearts. That was until a few days ago. Sam had mentioned Grandpa Mike's diagnosis and our hearts were broken, it brought back memories of when my Dad had a similar diagnosis. I know these days ahead will be challenging for everyone. Please don't forget to take the time to appreciate the moments together, smile and even laugh...no matter how hard it may seem.

#21

It will be hard, especially for the caregiver. My mom really struggled, and it was so hard for me to watch...you are strong, and I know you will be amazing! That is who you are. You have a beautiful family that will be there to support you through...including wonderful grandchildren whom I know love their grandparents very much.

Our prayers are with you all and we are praying for a miracle from above, He can make anything happen. Please accept this gift provided by our church but really directed by God. Our hope is that it can make a small difference, perhaps to order in Easter dinner or another meal to give you the time to spend together and not have to be concerned about spending time in the kitchen. We pray God's blessings over you all asking for hope and courage through the days ahead. "For with God nothing will be impossible" Luke 1:37

#22

When I received the \$100.00, I racked my brain trying to think of what I should do with it and how I could help someone else. It led me to make the decision to donate to the online auction for our youth group. Since my husband had recently passed, I decided to donate his beloved car and bike to the auction knowing how much it would please him knowing that it would help the kids in the youth group go on their mission trip which had meant so much to his granddaughter over the years. It was such a blessing imagining him dancing on the streets of gold in heaven!!

#23

I was wondering what on earth to do with the \$100 when my grandson and his maple syrup came to mind. I decided to buy some and give it away at church, thereby helping him and anyone who wanted maple syrup. So, I asked Chris how much I could buy for \$100. (Needless to say, he gave me a really good deal.) Pastor suggested putting a donation jar out for the Youth Group and on Sunday morning we brought the syrup to church. Six pints and many jelly jars full. We set it on the table with a free sign and a donation jar. By the end of the service, it was gone, and many people looked pleased. Chris enjoyed telling people about his enterprise and the donation jar looked good. There was \$196 in the jar.

#24

One night, my mom told me my aunt, who is mentally disabled, is going to be put into hospice. The doctors gave her 6-8 weeks to live. The next Sunday, Pastor Mark called the 50 people up on the stage and gave us all \$100. I thought about the things I could do with it. My dad told me he was going to give it to the home my aunt has been at almost her whole life, I knew that's what I should do with it. We went to see her, and we gave our money to them. As I'm writing this, I'm in class remembering all the details but do not have enough paper to write it on. I've started crying in the middle of writing this because this might have been one of the hardest yet easiest things I have ever done. God works in mysterious ways.

#25

Thank you for the opportunity to bless Manny, a panhandler in West Palm Beach. I had been bringing Manny food for several weeks and invited him to church with us. He said that he would like to go but that he didn't have suitable clothing. I bought him \$100 worth of clothing, some new and used - shirts, pants, and shoes, and he was very happy to receive them. He went to church with us and was very thankful afterwards. He heard the Gospel, seeds were planted, and I hope to continue in the process of watering those seeds. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to bless Manny. I, too, was blessed in the process.

#26

Hi Pastor. I was part of the \$100 Challenge. I shared my story with you around Easter. I felt God was leading me to give the money and a card to a woman who is chronically ill due to organ failure as a result of her addiction. I gave her a card with the \$100 just before Easter. I told her how much Jesus loved her and could give her hope and a new life if she would choose him. I told you I would keep you up to date and here we are.

I have seen her a few times since then and physically she is wasting away. But there is good news! Spiritually, she is alive and a believer in Christ! Unbeknownst to me, she has attended a local church near Brainerd when she is able. I gave her my copy of *The Chosen* (season 1) to watch and she was delighted, as she loves movies and has not yet seen this. If you have not watched [The Chosen](#) you need to! It's a fabulous mini-series on the ministry of Christ. It will not disappoint, I promise! I am so glad I was able to share this with her. I was also able to pray with her at that time in person. I will continue to do pray for her. What a gift and an opportunity this been from the Lord. I would not have stepped out in faith had it not been for this challenge. So, thank you Pastor and The Log church for pushing me out of my comfort zone. As followers of Christ I know I need to do this far more often than I do. Thank you again.

#27

I prayed and prayed about how to best use the money to spread the love of Jesus within our local community. A few thoughts of my own seemed like a possibility, but I really wanted it to be a leading from the Lord. A couple of weeks went by and I found myself shopping right here in Crosslake when I learned of a senior couple who was being displaced, with very short notice, from the home they had rented for more than 12 years. This lady was obviously stressed about all that had to be done with little time to accomplish it. And, of course, the financial burden was just another piece of that puzzle. I told her I would keep my ears open for any possible rental options and that I would pray for her situation. The \$100 didn't really enter my mind at the time.

The next week I was back at the store and again spoke with her, learning that nothing positive was happening in the search. I left the store and decided to make a stop at Common Goods, another favorite destination of mine. Inside I found the sales associate holding an old New Testament Bible that came from a donation box. She looked at me and said something about not knowing what to do with it; they didn't sell well, and she sometimes just gives them away. Right then and there the Lord told me to put the \$100 into the Bible and give it to the soon-to-be homeless couple who needed it to put toward the deposit on their new home. I told Sue what I was planning and she, of course, gave me the Bible. Gary immediately agreed that he should put his \$100 toward this special gift.

Covid or not, I got a huge hug from the lady in need, along with tears of gratitude. She asked me to say "Thank You" to The Log Church and our very generous pastors.

Thanks for the opportunity and encouragement to shine a light in our little corner of the world.