



The Sharing Organization

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## Ministry Moment...

The Funeral of Miss Isabel Merritt...

The other month I was called to do the funeral for a lady. It's common for me to be called out of the blue like this--I mainly do funerals for people I don't know and who have no pastor, but after meeting with the family, I realized that Isabel was a resident at one of the homes where I have served for years.

Isabel was always in the services, and she made sure to let me know how much she appreciated that my team and I came each week to share the gospel with her. Over the years she had slipped into being less able to join us as she became more sickly, and she eventually moved on to a facility with more nursing care ability. After meeting with the family and realizing who she was, I was thrilled to be able to share how much she had been involved with me.

As I contemplated the funeral I realized that Isabel was exactly the person that we created the Sharing Org for all those years before. A person who could not leave her home to go to a local church but who still needed – *wanted* – to worship and fellowship with the Church.

Her children told me that she had been active in her church all of their lives and when she moved to the nursing home she had lost contact. It needs to be noted that it was not her church's intention to lose contact, but it is the reality of the circumstances. As she aged, so did her friends, and her pastor aged and retired as well. She was old enough that she was one of the last of her contemporaries still alive, and the new young pastor of her church really didn't know that she ever existed – and it wasn't his or anyone's fault; it was just how it worked out. Her children thanked me for the work that we do at The Sharing Org as Isabel's story is not an uncommon one in our aging society.

It was a great blessing to do Isabel's funeral as I was reminded that it was for people like her that we do what we are doing. And I am so grateful to you who help us to serve God in this way.

~John

**And we know that in all things  
God works for the good of those who love him,  
who have been called according to his purpose.**

**(Romans 8:28)**

## Prayer Letter...

Dear Suzie,

I am totally humbled. Back in October I started noticing how we weren't going to make budget, and the ministry checking account was getting alarmingly low. I started praying about it, knowing that God has never *not* provided, and I was curiously anticipating how He would provide for us yet again. As I write (12/29), we are only 2.3% off budget – *which I am thrilled with*. Most everyone has given very generously throughout the year and these past couple of months, to help fill in the shortfall of the budget to get us set for the year. I have tried to keep up on mailing personal thank you notes, but if I have missed sending you one (or I have sent you two) please forgive me. One of my 2018 goals is to get a better system to help me remember who I owe a thank you to and whom I have already sent one. I really was overwhelmed these past couple months by your generosity and I thank you!

The 2018 year excites me as I plan for it. I hope to have a few get-togethers with our local Prayer Partners like we used to do years ago at the pizza place. We liked the face to face interactions we had with everyone but have somehow gotten away from that. I am sorry and want that to change, so be sure to look for upcoming events.

Also, I am working on a plan for a new program with the residents. I call it the Pedestrian Packages. It's sort of like our annual Shoebox program, but this is an off-Christmas program that helps the residents to create safety packages for pedestrians. Here's the skinny. In the Chesterfield community there are a lot of people who walk along streets with no sidewalks on their way to and from the bus stops, and most seem to dress in black clothing. When it is bright and shiny out, there is no problem, but when dusk and dark set in they become quite hard to see. Too many times I have been shocked to see a person in my headlights, thankful that I didn't hit them with my car. We have too many pedestrians hit and killed around here. So the Pedestrian Package is something the residents can assemble as a missions project to help pedestrians to be safe. My idea is that each package will contain a reflective vest that will catch and reflect headlights, maybe even a little flashlight, a bottle of water, a pack of gum, a Gospel of John, a Gospel Tract, and whatever else should be added that is yet to be determined. I hope to be able to get with the residents twice annually for assembly parties just as we already get together for our annual Shoebox parties. So please pray for this program as I get all the details worked out. I hope to begin a social media fundraiser in February, so time is coming up fast. Oh, and we will still be doing Shoeboxes!

As always, I pray you and your personal efforts to exalt our savior are fruitful and prosperous for the Kingdom!

Happy New Year,



John R. Rock