

New Westminster Evangelical Free Church

Brief History of Our Church ..

In 1936, Rev. Olai Urang came to Vancouver from Enchant, Alberta, to begin a work with the Evangelical Free Church. This was the beginning of the Bethel Evangelical Free Church which is now the Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Free Church. Rev. Urang recognized a real need to begin a work in the New Westminster area. To meet the need he called Ed and Hazel Nielson along with William (Bill) and Josephine Johnson, both recent graduates from Prairie Bible Institute, Three Hills, Alberta. Ed and Hazel Nielson arrived in 1939 and started a small Sunday School at the corner of Edmonds and Douglas Road (now Canada Way). Bill and Josephine Johnson arrived in 1940 to assist the Nielson's. The Nielson's left for the mission field shortly after the Johnson's arrived. Bill and Josephine began home Bible studies in a number of Norwegian homes. These Norwegian folk were often referred to as the four "V"s. They were the Vegsunds, the Vikes, the Vestads and the Venos's.

Rev. Olai Urang and Bill Johnson, along with these Norwegian families, started a Gospel radio ministry that spread across Western Canada, Montana, North Dakota and Northern Minnesota. Other families were soon added to this little group and they soon felt the need for a permanent meeting place. Land was purchased at the corner of 10th Avenue and Douglas Road, now Canada Way, and a church building was erected and in the summer of 1943, the first New Westminster Evangelical Free Church was dedicated to the Glory of God and to the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Rev. L. E. Maxwell, founder and President of Prairie Bible Institute was the speaker at this dedication. By this time a number of other families had begun to attend the services, They were Mr. and Mrs. Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Sutherland, Mr. and Mrs. Beck, Mr. and Mrs. Dahi, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and others. The congregation first organized and selected a Church Board on March 25, 1945.

The New Westminster Evangelical Free Church has been blessed through the years by many godly Pastors and lay workers. The church was founded and dedicated to the spreading of the Gospel in accordance with Christ's command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel" Matthew 28:19. With each Pastor this mandate was carried out and we have seen men and women sent from this church into all five continents of the globe and to many of it's islands. Missions is still the very core of the church's activities and we trust it will continue until the Lord calls His Church home.

In helping to spread the Gospel near home, this church was instrumental in helping start Evangelical Free Churches in Port Coquitlam, Green Timbers (now Johnston Heights), North Delta and Langley. They also helped to negotiate with the independent Gospel Chapel in White Rock to join with the Evangelical Free Church.

In the early 1980s, the church began to take on a different look. Peoples from backgrounds other than Caucasian began to attend. A number of African people and Native Indians were among others who found friendliness in our church. However, it was in the late 1998s and early 1999s that the whole look of our congregation changed. In February of 1999, there were added to the congregation 23 members, mostly Japanese believers and we became truly a multi-cultural church with some eleven ethnic groups now in attendance. It is the strong desire of our church family that our doors will always be open to every person God sends our way, regardless of ethnic background, and the Church leadership is strongly committed to carrying out the congregation's desires and the mandate given to us by Christ.