



Our First Funeral



In our first year, the Lord has allowed us to have the joys of Baptisms, Baby Dedications, Weddings, and now, a Funeral. **Terry Theis** was a sweet man who had numerous ailments stemming from his diabetes. These ailments made it so that he could not walk and was almost completely blind. I recall going to lunch with Terry several months back. He told me that he didn't want to be a burden to such a small church, so he would find his way to a larger ministry. I told Terry that he was a burden, but one we gladly bore. He provided us with an unparalleled opportunity to find selfless service.

In his last months with us, Terry's disability challenged Jessica and myself. Ministering to him was more difficult than with others, so we hadn't allowed ourselves to get very close to Terry. We decided to truly love him, exchanging handshakes for hugs, and even delivering furniture to his apartment. God needed Terry to help our family move past appearances so that we could truly love the people He entrusted to us. Once He had accomplished this task, Terry was freed from his bodily prison to be with his Lord.

We made many visits during his last couple of weeks in the hospital. We read Scripture and sang hymns to Terry. He couldn't speak, and couldn't move anything below his neck, but he bobbed his head to the rhythm. We knew he was paying attention when we tried to sing him some Christmas Carols, and he shook us off like a pitcher to a catcher. Jessica had the privilege of singing him into the arms of Jesus. As she sang "Glory to His Name," our friend Terry smiled and passed away.

Our church family prepared to host Terry's family for the funeral. We were blown away when over 100 people came to pay their final respects to him. The Gospel presentation was made to a diverse group of individuals. A gay married couple, family members who have never been to church, two of the doctors who cared for him, and individuals that his personal ministry had touched during his 59 years. Terry's son and daughter-in-law, whom he had fervently prayed for, have been in church every Sunday since his passing. We have also had more than ten individuals who have shown interest and even attended services, because of the love and hope they saw at the funeral. God is working in Kankakee!!

