

BVVB

June 2017

Editor Janelle Daum

Volume 15, Issue 2

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JUNE AND BEYOND

Birthdays:

June 2017

- 1 Melanie Sittig
- 5 Dan Murphy
- 9 Mike Hokenstad
- 10 Leona Veldkamp
- 11 Darrel Osberg
- 16 LeeRoy Nelson
- 21 Terry Kramer
- 23 Nehemiah Hsiao
- 24 Felicity Ebright
- 26 Ashley Onnen
- 26 Chris Benson

- 11 Justin & Sara Tiffany
- 25 Mike & Debra Kresak
- 27 Rob & Pam Thorson
- 30 Doyle & Barbara Young

Nursery:

June 2017

- 4 Pam Osmanson & Hailey Skogen
- 11 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
- 18 Erica Skogen
- 25 Ginger & Katrina Nelson

July 2017

- 2 Dee Olson & Dan Hanson
- 9 Aaron Skogen
- 16 Shawna James
- 23 Marlene Smith
- 30 Justin & Sara Tiffany

Anniversaries:

June 2017

- 2 Merv & Jackie Kramer
- 5 Mike & Stacey Frost

E-mail: jbvbeditor@hotmail.com your article.

August 2017

- 6 Aaron Skogen
- 13 Pam Osmanson & Hailey Skogen
- 20 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
- 27 Erica Skogen

Childrens Worship:**June 2017**

- 4 Sara Tiffany & Garrett James
- 11 LaDell Hanson & Megan Questad
- 18 Theresa Friesen & Cade Fox
- 25 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen

July 2017

- 2 2D Gerdes & Trevor Skogen
- 9 LaDell Hanson & Hailey Skogen
- 16 Matt Murphy & Cade Fox
- 23 Barbara Young & Kyle Skogen
- 30 Doris Conradson & Hailey Skogen

Scripture Reading:**June 2017**

- 4 Pat Lacey
- 11 Gene Preston
- 18 Lindy Johnson
- 25 Theresa Friesen

July 2017

- 2 Lindy Johnson
- 9 Gene Preston

- 16 Joan Murphy
- 23 Justin Tiffany
- 30 Pat Lacey

August 2017

- 6 Trevor Skogen
- 13 Lindy Johnson
- 20 Hannah Frost
- 27 Kelsey Frost

Greeters:**June 2017**

- 4 Lindy Johnson
- 11 Ray & Dee Olson
- 18 Pat Lacey & Scott Sittig
- 25 Dan & Joan Murphy

July 2017

- 2 Terry & Chris Kramer
- 9 LeeRoy & Ginger Nelson
- 16 Glen & Doris Conradson
- 23 Aaron & Erica Skogen
- 30 Gene & Judy Preston

August 2017

- 6 Justin & Sara Tiffany
- 13 Doyle & Barb Young
- 20 Dan & LaDell Hansen
- 27 Lindy Johnson

Ushers:

June 2017

- 4 Paul Osmandson
- 11 Mike Kresak
- 18 Doyle Young
- 25 Scott Sittig

July 2017

- 2 Doyle Young
- 9 Terry Kramer
- 16 Justin Tiffany
- 23 Gene Preston
- 30 Dave James

August 2017

- 6 Paul Osmandson
- 13 Mike Kresak
- 20 Doyle Young
- 27 Gene Preston

Events Calendar 2017:

Thursday, June 1, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Sunday, June 4, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

5:30 p.m., Congregational Prayer Service

Thursday, June 8, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Saturday, June 10, 7 a.m., Men's Bible study (at the church)

Sunday, June 11, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

Wednesday, June 14, Flag Day

Thursday, June 15, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Sunday, June 18, Father's Day

9:30 a.m., Worship Service - SONrise Gospel Music Ministries (Harlow & Jarene Rudolph) will sing

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

5:30 p.m., Congregational Prayer Service

Newsletter Articles are Due

Wednesday, June 21, Summer Begins

Thursday, June 22, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Sunday, June 25, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service

10:30 a.m., Fellowship

10:45 a.m., Sunday School for the Whole Family

Thursday, June 29, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Women's Evening Bible Study (at various homes to be announced)

Sunday, July 2, 9:30 a.m., Worship Service - The Allen Family will sing

Sunday, July 16 - Thursday, July 20, 6:30 p.m., Vacation Bible School

SPOTLIGHT ON BRANDON VALLEY BAPTIST MISSIONS

Our June love offering is for St. Francis House in Sioux Falls - Moving People From Homeless to Hope. We will also be making and serving a meal for 65 residents in June (please sign up to help).

What is St. Francis House?

St. Francis House is a homeless shelter that provides emergency and transitional housing for men, women, and families in need.

Where is St. Francis House located?

1301 E. Austin Street (one block north and one block east of the 8th Street and Cliff Avenue intersection).

Who operates St. Francis House?

St. Francis House is nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation. It is organized under a board of directors, which is responsible for hiring and overseeing the program Executive Director.

How is St. Francis House funded?

St. Francis House relies almost exclusively on private donations. Individual donors, businesses, and churches share their resources to support our mission of providing hope to the homeless.

Who is eligible for assistance?

All homeless individuals and families are potentially eligible for temporary housing at St. Francis House. All individuals are required to follow our program rules.

What services are provided for homeless guests?

St. Francis House provides shelter, food, and case management services to all our guests. Every day, three meals, a warm bed, showers, basic necessities, and support to our guests is provided.

REALITY CHECK WITH GOD AND YOURSELF

Pastor's Reflections

June is the month regarded as the official start of summer. School is out, the sun stays up longer and the days seem to go on forever. As a child in North Dakota, this meant I could play baseball until I dropped. At the end of an extended hot day I would head home from the baseball field to something far greater than food, shelter, a bath and a change of clean clothes - it was the welcome I received from my parents. They were always glad to see me and my twin brother. who was always with me. There was something nice about their welcome. Sometimes we'd just sit around the living room watching our black and white TV. There was nothing which filled me more or revived my energy better than those occasions. Home was a place where I always felt welcome.

As I look back on those days I'm reminded of a story Jesus told about a prodigal son. If you look closely at the words in Luke 15, you will notice the warm embrace of a father's love. While the son was far off, the father ran to meet him. And when he reached his son, he not only held, but kissed him. The account says the father "threw" his arms around him in "compassion". I always felt that no

matter what I did, my parents would always welcome me in their arms of love. On those occasions when I would stub my toe, step on a nail, or had a splinter in my finger, my mother's arms were superior to any medicine in relieving my pain. It's a reminder to me of the wonderful potential of parental love, and most of all, my Heavenly Father's love for me.

- Pastor Merv

A TRIBUTE TO PARENTS

- Author Unknown

You do not ask for honors;
You do not look for fame,
But you deserve them both because
You always "play the game".
You meet each test of living
With a heart that's always glad;
That's why you'll ever be to me,
The best thing next to God.

Moments for Moms

by jacqueline

Grace! What thoughts and feelings arise in you as you consider that word and all that it means?

God is grace and the giver of grace, undeserved kindness. Because we have experienced it, we have the privilege of extending it to others whether we think they deserve it or not. How about showing grace to ourselves? It is so easy to get caught in the rat race trying trying to reach an impossible standard we have set for ourselves to do it all and to do it all well. Perfect doesn't equal worthy. God is pouring grace on us every day, abundantly and without restraint. So, if God is giving us so much grace, why aren't we giving ourselves a little more grace? God has set a standard outside our realm of thinking. Instead of calling us to be hopeless overachievers, he calls us to "walk by the Spirit" (Galations 5:16, 22-23) Grace gives us the opportunity to slow down and savor what truly matters. Let's hold ourselves to a standard of grace and not to the world's idea of perfection.

SHAN REED JAPAN

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

May 2017

Dear Family and Friends,

The anticipation of the cherry blossoms each spring is heightened for me with the anticipation of the celebration of Resurrection Sunday. Although the cherry blossom season is short-lived, the joy and hope of the resurrection go with us each day of the year.

Komyo Christian Church

What an exciting spring we have had at Komyo Church! Thank you for your prayers. God is at work.

In March we welcomed gospel singer Kaori Mukahi to our Live Gospel Café. It was an evening of various genres of music. Kaori san was classically trained in Europe so she sang some classical songs as well as gospel songs. Three of the guests that evening were gospel musician friends of Kaori san's who live near the church. We had a fun, impromptu special guest performance section of the concert that evening!

Just a few weeks after the concert we had a very exciting church business meeting at which we welcomed two new members to Komyo Church. Mrs. Nanri has been a Christian since she was a university student and has been attending our church for a little over a year. Even before becoming a member she was a willing volunteer and faithfully attending Bible study. She said that the challenge of writing her testimony and reflecting on her life was a joy and helped her see God's work in her life. Mr. Kawasaki is an energetic young man whose zest for life and Jesus are contagious. Although he has only been a Christian for a little over a year, his insight into God's word challenges us as we study together. Praise God for these two new members and their joy for serving Jesus and growing in their faith. It was fun to have the children sing for us on Easter and remind us of the love Jesus showed to us and the salvation He provided through the cross and resurrection. We continued our church's tradition with a fellowship meal of sushi after the service. What a joy to see everyone enjoying a meal together, serving each other, helping each other, sharing life and Jesus' love.

Japan Baptist Conference (JBC)

At the end of March the JBC youth gathered for our spring overnight camp. The theme for this year's camp was "Change." We talked about the big change in Jesus' life as He was baptized and started His ministry and then the challenge He faced with this new change as He was led into the wilderness and tested. Since April begins a new school year for the students, the new middle school students joined us for the camp. They were warmly welcomed by the other students. The graduating seniors also gave the students a challenge, encouraging them to attend the youth events as much as possible to keep growing in their faith and also for the fellowship. Their words were a great encouragement to us as the youth committee, too!

Every year in May we gather as a conference to worship, learn and fellowship together. This year for the first time in many years the gathering was held over two days. It gave us a chance to have more time for fellowship without feeling rushed. It also provided time for the youth to gather for a special time of worship and Bible study together. We even got to lead two songs during worship time on the second day. I know I say it often, but it truly is exciting to see the growth in these students!

Anointed Gospel Choir

I continue to enjoy singing praises with Anointed Gospel Choir. We participated in the annual party of all of Yamamoto Sensei's choirs at the beginning of April. Although only a few ladies in the choir are Christians, their growth in prayer and desire to share the gospel with the other members is encouraging and challenging to me.

As always, your prayers mean more to me than words can express. Thank you for continuing to lift up Komyo Christian Church and all of these precious people with whom I interact.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Shan in Japan

PRAISES

- Praise God for two new members at Komyo Christian Church
- Praise the Lord for music and the way it touches our souls and shares Jesus' love
- Praise God for the youth of JBC and the way they are growing in faith and fellowship.

· Praise God for the joy and hope of the resurrection!

PRAYER REQUESTS

· Please pray for Komyo Christian Church as we seek to share the love of Jesus in our homes and neighborhood

· Pray for our new church members to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord

· Pray for AGC and the Christians in the group who desire to share the gospel

· Please pray for my walk with Jesus to flourish and that Jesus' love would always flow through me and His light shine in my life.

RON & JEANNIE SECK HUNGARY

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

May 2017

Dear Ministry Partners,

In 2017 Jeannie and I are splitting our time evenly between Central Europe and North America. As our teams and leaders in Europe mature in their work, it frees us to do more traveling, visiting and training in the U.S. and Canada.

So, first, here's some of the news from Central Europe.

Good News from a village called "Happy" The Hungarian word for "happy" is "boldog." You joined us in prayer for the evangelistic meetings in the Roma community of Boldog last September. We asked God for a spiritual open door and He has granted our request. Laci and Eszter Daroczi-Csuhai have been able to start discipleship groups for teen-age boys and girls, plus a weekly Bible Study for adults. Three young men have recently made commitments to follow Christ. They are being followed-up weekly with Bible study and guitar lessons. They helped lead a small worship service in Boldog on Easter Sunday morning!

The music for one night of the Boldog crusade was provided by a godly Christian Roma family from a nearby village. Since then, Feri, his wife, and two daughters have been graciously and wonderfully assisting Laci and Eszter in Boldog. Feri has had Bible school training, is a mature Christian, a strong teacher and a wonderful musician. He is also a good construction worker, but strongly desires to enter full-time Christian ministry. Join us in praying for Feri as he expands the work of CHE. Feri is opening the door for CHE ministry in the nearby communities of

Zsambok and Jaszfenyszaru.

Workshop for Gifted Students Presented in Romania

Ordinarily our work is with the poorly educated and marginalized. Laci, Hessel, Jeannie and I had quite a change-of-pace from this when we led a two-day workshop for gifted-talented high school students in Oradea, Romania, in April. Teodora Chifor, our contact in Oradea, Romania, has developed a top-notch after-school program for high school students she hopes will be the future leaders of Romania. Because of this, she wants these students from all or no religious background to be educated in spiritual truth as well. She counted on us to do a workshop on Entrepreneurship that was based on Biblical truth. The 25 students were all bilingual (Romanian and English), highly motivated, very intelligent and a whole lot of fun to work with.

The gut-level moment came when Hessel Keuter gave a presentation on integrity in business and used his Christian grandfather in Holland as a powerful illustration. Only two months earlier the Romanian people had taken to the streets in mass protests against their own political leaders who had passed a law that they could not be prosecuted for stealing amounts less than \$50,000! We pointed out that the corruption of the fathers had been passed down to the sons for far too many generations in Romania. These young people were going to be the new generation of leaders. Were they going to be leaders of integrity or corruption? They stood for integrity. We told them they would need God at work in their lives to stand firm in this commitment. Pray for our future opportunities with Teodora and these wonderful young people.

Now for Some North American News.

On the Road Again!

While we are in the States for the meetings of Global CHE Network and the International Wholistic Mission Conference, Jeannie and I are taking the opportunity to visit NAB (supporting and non-supporting) churches that are hard to visit at our normal time of January and February.

Here is our travel schedule:

May 19 to 25 - Edmonton, Alberta, area.

May 30 to June 6 -Vernon - Kelowna, BC, area

May 25 to 30 - Vancouver, BC, area

June 6 to 12 - Dallas, Oregon, area

We've tried to contact all NAB churches in these areas to set up a meeting or coffee times. If we missed you, please contact us at ronseck@gmail.com.

Neighborhood Transformation Training scheduled for Winnipeg, June 13-15

Rev. Sig Seidel and Mission Baptist Church is in a culturally changing community in the poorest section of Winnipeg ... and they want to be a significant part of it! Pastor Sig longs to see his church transform people and their neighborhoods. They will take a step in that direction when they host an Urban CHE (or Neighborhood Transformation) Training Conference June 13 to 15 at Mission Baptist Church. Ron and Jeannie will join Master NT Trainer Garold Elston from Bakersfield, California, in facilitating training that equips church leaders and members with strategies, plans, skills, tools and resources to begin to penetrate their community effectively.

If you would like to attend this training conference or to have more information on Urban CHE, contact Rev. Seidel or Ron Seck at ronseck@gmail.com.

PRAISES

- Last summer we had a great ESL team from Steamboat Rock, Iowa
- We could not get an NAB team this year. So the Christian Roma have decided to do it themselves in August! Pray!
- For the addition of Feri and his family as volunteer CHE workers with Laci and Eszter.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Marijana Cizmanski needs wisdom for two difficult situations in Serbia.
- Ron and Jeannie will be travelling with Laci, Eszter and Simi Daroczi visiting churches in Alberta, B.C., and Oregon May 19 to June 12
- We are seeking partners to cover Feri's salary so that he can join our team full-time ASAP.

RICK & DEBBI BARDIN CAMEROON

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

May 2017

Dear all family and friends from around the world,

We are so happy for the coming of May and the green mountains and hills that

surround us. We had an extra-long dry season this year. The banana trees that always survive the dry season were falling down. For those of you who have been to the back waterfall which never lacks for water – even it dried up this dry season!! We also had the fun of having low water pressure or being completely out of water many days in February and March. So, we kept buckets of water on hand to boil for drinking, for dishes, toilet flushing and had to take bucket baths a few times. Let us never take indoor plumbing for granted

Easter was extra special this year because we got to spend it with friends who had come out from the US to help here at Mbingo Baptist Hospital. Dr. Dick and Marian Douce came for a couple of weeks. We knew them from our connection with Southwestern Medical Clinic in Michigan. We trekked up the mountain together about 4:30 am and celebrated the Resurrection Day together (see pictures). Also, Dennis Little, a pathology assistant, came back. He has been here several times before. He is a great help to Rick.

Deb continues to find great joy in sharing about the love of Jesus with her patients. What a privilege it is to be able to share scripture, testimonies and prayer with them. The picture to the right is with one of the patients who had just received a Bible as I registered her into our program. In the background, you may see the TV we have in the waiting room that still plays many Christian videos daily to help encourage our patients and anyone passing by.

We have some very special news to share about our daughter, Jeanna. She is pregnant with a baby girl! She is due in September so we will be altering our furlough plans to take it this year from September to December. Through the help of our wonderful friend, Tom Crow, and the generosity of First Baptist Church in Nashville, housing has been made available to us during those months. Now we just need pathologists to come to Mbingo and cover for Rick during those months. Someone has already signed up to cover September!

In His Matchless Love,
Rick and Debbie

PRAISES

- Patients who continue to ask for scripture cards when I may forget.
- Great volunteer support these last 3 months for our missionary doctors.
- CT Scanner that has been purchased for the hospital.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- For patients coming to MBH to hear the gospel and know Jesus better.
- For volunteer pathologists to come during October–December to cover for Rick.
- For Jeanna’s pregnancy to go well.
- For the safe shipping and installation of the CT Scanner.

AMANDA BENSON

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

May 1, 2017

OUT OF THE BLUE!

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10 ESV

“Do you teach math?”

The question came on Facebook messenger from a fellow missionary who is serving in the Philippines, but not at Faith Academy. She then proceeded to tell me about another missionary she works with who runs a summer school for Filipinos and was looking for someone to train their teachers how to tutor math. These teachers have gone through the program themselves and are now giving back other kids in their community. As they do, they earn money to put towards college or other schooling needs. These teachers ranged from ages 13 - 20, and the program is for grades K - 6.

“Would you be interested in helping?” she asked.

Of course! If you know me well, you know I love math! When I got my masters degree as a math specialist a few years ago, I had no idea that I would be able to use it for anything beyond improving my classroom teaching (maybe transforming my teaching is a more accurate description). I had thrown around the idea of possibly using it one day to be an international math coach - someone who would travel to different Christian schools and give teachers tips for teaching math. However, I never thought I’d get to do that exact thing for Filipinos!

I showed up to the hour session, manipulatives in hand, prepared to talk about basic strategies for understanding place value, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. We had a blast as these teachers discovered new ways of thinking about math. In the Philippine school system, most learning is done by rote memorization

and not problem solving, so it was a joy to watch how these students could take some of these new strategies and apply them to new situations. Before I was even half-way through addition strategies, an hour had passed, and they asked me if I would come back a few more times to minister to these kids. Of course I said I would as my schedule permitted! I've already returned once, and I will probably go one or two more times, as their summer school program is only about six weeks long.

As I drove away from that first session, I had the overwhelming, joyous feeling I get when I know I'm doing something that God created me to do. I was reminded again that I serve a God who goes before me, one who prepares me to do the good works that He has prepared ahead of time for me to do.

This year, I have felt an increased longing for Jesus to return and make all things right in this world. I believe that it will not be until the day that we are with Jesus that we will look back and truly be able to see how God prepared everything for us to do and how He prepared us to do it all. We will see how all of the puzzle pieces fit together to make a beautiful picture. Our God is a God of details. Nothing slips by Him or catches Him by surprise. This encounter was out of the blue for me, but it was completely planned by God well before I even came to the Philippines or considered the idea of getting my masters degree. It was planned before I developed a love for math or had the desire to be a teacher from my childhood. It was even planned before I was formed in my mother's womb.

God knows me intimately because He formed me. He created me for a purpose, and I pray that I will forever seek Him wholeheartedly so that I might continually fulfill that purpose.

Thank you for your part in allowing me to do just that here in the Philippines.

Amanda

Praises

- I have a new nephew! Liam Cole was born as the third child to my older brother on April 29! :)
- That God has allowed me the opportunity to use my masters degree and my love for math to help Filipinos teach math.
- After Outdoor Ed, our students always have a fundraiser to help the community where we served. This year we were asked if we could raise money for sustainable

chicken farms. We usually raise around 35,000 pesos (around \$700), but we challenged the kids to go beyond this year by setting a goal of just over 104,000 pesos - enough to buy four complete farms and a freezer. They ended up exceeding our goal, raising 114,000 pesos (\$2300)! That was far more than we have ever raised in the past! Praise God!

Prayer Requests

- We have one month left of school, and it will be busy! Pray that the students and staff finish strong and that we would balance our time well as we manage all we need to do.
- Please continue to pray for staffing needs. We have many unfilled positions for the coming school year, but we trust that God will continue to provide, as He has for the past 60 years of Faith Academy's existence. [Click here for a list of needs.](#)
- My parents are coming at the end of the month!!! Pray for their trip and our time together, but pray especially for my dad's health. He has many health issues, so pray that he has no problems as he adjusts to the different climate and time zone of the Philippines.

DARWIN & KAREN STOESZ

(Please see Missionary Board for Pictures)

May 4, 2017

Stoesz Ministry Update

Housing

The Lord provides. One of Darwin's responsibilities as business manager for SEND Japan is finding housing for all our career, short term, and vision trip missionaries. Sometimes it isn't always easy to find housing, but SEND Japan has never had a missionary homeless. We had a career missionary come back from home service and they looked for a house for several months and it seemed like every house the door just closed.

Last week this family moved into one of these houses that the Lord provided. It is uniquely situated and we pray will be used by God to further His kingdom in this area.

Another missionary is looking for an apartment, but this missionary's desire for ministry is contingent on the location of housing. If this missionary can get into the

right apartment complex then she will be able to have an open door to hopefully start a house church or small group in that area. Pray for wisdom as they decide with SEND leadership and with church leadership to know where a good location is for her.

Office Work

The office continues to be busy. There are always new challenges that come day to day and the Lord gives wisdom for every new challenge.

Darwin continues to train his replacement for the year when we will be on home service. Darwin will completely hand off the business manager responsibilities on May 27th after the conclusion of the SEND Japan May Business meeting.

Christian Academy in Japan

Karen will continue as a CAJ Board member till the end of the school year. She has enjoyed this ministry very much the past few years. Anna and Clara's last day of school will be June 9. Anna will celebrate her 8th grade graduation on May 26th.

Home Service Plans

Darwin and Karen will be arriving in Wichita, Kansas on June 24th and have signed a lease for a hospitality house in Wichita, Kansas. The girls will be attending Trinity Academy for the year, a Christian school in the area.

Pray that God will help Anna and Clara as they transition from their life in Japan to their passport country, a country which they hardly understand. Their view of America is only from distant memories and what they see portrayed on TV and the news.

Family

Anna is having fun playing basketball for the Christian Academy in Japan Knights on the Middle School A team. She enjoys the time and the interactions with her friends. She has her final game and tournament on Saturday at ASIJ (American School in Japan).

Anna's spaghetti bridge for the science bridge contest made it to school, but did not bear much weight. We were all relieved when the broken pieces of spaghetti went into the trash can.

Mr. Tsune and Seibu Lions Baseball

This Friday, Darwin and Mr. Tsune will go to a baseball game together with a man

from our church. Pray that this opportunity will lead to spiritual discussions and that in God's timing Mr. Tsune will become a follower of Jesus.

Significant Calendar Events / Prayer requests this week

1. Friday, Darwin will go to a Seibu Lions baseball game with Mr. Tsune and Mr. Kanazawa.
 2. Friday, Clara is going to a birthday party at a local karaoke place.
 3. Saturday, Darwin will be one of the drivers for Anna's basketball game.
 4. Tuesday, Karen has a CAJ Governance meeting.
 5. Tuesday, Darwin has a SEND leadership meeting
 6. Wednesday, Darwin will give a short devotional in Japanese at Nishibori Christ Gospel Church.
 7. Thursday, May 11 Karen has coffee with a neighbor lady and a Believer from church.
 8. Thursday, Darwin will go to Okutama Bible Chalet to perform their annual audit.
 9. Friday, Darwin will go with the 3rd graders on a field trip.
 10. Sunday, May 14th, Darwin will share a lesson in Sunday School in Japanese.
- Thank you for your continued partnership in our ministry here in Japan.
Darwin & Karen & Anna (13) & Clara (9) Stoesz

MISSION NETWORK NEWS

Big ideas and bold commitment for Belize

PUBLISHED ON 8 May, 2017 BY Ruth K'lama

Belize (MNN) - In February, Mission Cry, formerly Christian Resources International, announced a bold plan to blanket Belize with the Gospel.

Executive Director Jason Woolford explains, "There are over 300,000 people in the country of Belize. Our goal is that each person will have the ability to get a Bible or a Christian book, because we know what the Bible says about the power of the testimony. Christian books are filled with those, and we know that God says in His Word that His Word won't return void."

Although Belize has a long history of exposure to the Bible, the need is for discipleship and for people to encounter Christ through the Word of God, according to their ministry partner, John Foy. That means they need their own Bibles and

other tools.

In an earlier story, we recounted how Foy met Woolford through the suggestion of a mutual friend. Foy had been involved with a resource distribution in a village in Belize and ran out of materials. This friend suggested he get in touch with Woolford and Mission Cry. From there, not only was a distribution trip planned for November, but also a free concert with the Michael Maher Band, street evangelism, a crusade, and a Bible and Christian book giveaway. Medical missions will be part of the visit as well.

Why Belize? The Joshua Project estimates 86 percent of the people profess themselves Christians, although many have been discipled in a Body where there is a disconnect between faith and a personal relationship with Christ. Mission Cry is getting involved partly because of the opportunity, partly because of high literacy rates, and partly because English is widely spoken there. The biggest reason, though, is because local believers asked for help.

Woolford says, “We’re giving people what they need to fight the spiritual battle while they’re on this earth. It’s impossible to do when you need to make a decision between feeding your family and getting the Word of God.”

It’s a huge undertaking, he admits. This one also includes Spanish materials, as well. However, “We need people to send in Bibles and Christian books, most importantly Bibles, because we’re a little low on those for this particular project.” Your unused Bibles and Christian books could help make the difference.

To ship: Pack your books in an 18x18x12 box and send via the USPS “Media Mail”. “Media Mail” cost is approximately \$20 per 18x18x12 inch box.

Ship to: Christian Resources International, 200 Free Street, Fowlerville, MI 48836

Gospel translation for Thai Sign Language

PUBLISHED ON 18 May, 2017 BY Julie Bourdon

Thailand (MNN) - Teamwork is essential to completing the Great Commission. This is obvious in the joint work mission groups are doing to reach the Deaf communities around the globe. The truth is, when you look at the history of the Church making the Gospel accessible, this group has been extremely neglected. Fortunately, more mission groups are working to change that.

Wycliffe Bible Translators USA has been involved in sign language Bible

translations projects for about two decades now. Wycliffe's Andy Keener says, as more sign language projects are taken up within Bible translation, they've witnessed a joy akin to that in the early Church as the Gospel was spread.

He says, "Many have never thought about Bible translation. They've seen the Bible as a book that is for hearing people, and not for them. And so, these initial engagements have begun to generate a lot of excitement and enthusiasm in communities around the world."

Getting the work done together

Wycliffe USA primarily plays a support and partnership role in the translation process as they provide funding and workers. In this work, they help to identify people who are good story tellers in their sign language and coach them in interacting with the Scriptures. The end goal is to video record the Bible passages so they can be distributed.

Keener says they work with many partners — notably DOOR International and Deaf Bible Society. Wycliffe partners with deaf-led regional organizations as well. "We're very much interested in partnering with organizations that are working both in their own communities at regional levels, and then some of these international organizations that really focus globally on seeing sign language Bible translation available for all."

The Thai Church

Right now, Wycliffe is involved in about ten translation projects, including one in Thailand. Keener explains that the Thai Sign Language translation project is less than a decade old. The team working on it right now consists of a few different groups who are translating the Bible chronologically.

Keener explains why: "We found that this is a really key way of engaging the Deaf because in sign language, doing things in a storying fashion chronologically is really powerful and Deaf people have found it a very appropriate way culturally to understand Scripture and to understand the message of Salvation."

The storying format means Scripture is cut into full stories, much like we might see in a Bible story book.

"When we do that, within sign language, we're able to have someone in the signing take that entire story and craft that together, having every segment of what is in the Scripture part of that story, but done in a visual way."

Transformation

As we've shared in the past with translation stories, hearing the Gospel in your heart language is so different than having to learn it through a secondary language. It's the same for the Deaf community. Their heart language is a sign language, and even if they can read, it's still like learning through a second language.

"They can interact with Scripture some," Keener says, "but when they get it in their heart language, it really impacts them at a deeper level."

So as Scripture is translated into Thai Sign Language, more and more in this community are able to hear the Gospel and respond.

"Many people are for the first time realizing, there's a message here that's for them and not just for hearing people. They've seen that as a huge gulf — less than 0.1 percent of the Deaf community in Thailand are known or expected to be believers at this point," Keener says.

So as they continue in this work, there are a few things we can do. First and most importantly, we can pray. Ask God to raise up spiritual leaders in all of the Deaf communities around the world, even those that have no witness at this time. Ask Him to give courage, safety, and the power of the Holy Spirit to translation teams who are crossing borders to share the Good News with other Deaf communities.

And this is our motivation for prayer: "Every country in the world has Deaf people. And in each of those places there are Deaf people who the way that they communicate is through sign language. [There's] not a single sign language in the world today that has a complete Bible. In most sign languages in the world today, there's not even a single verse that is available in that language."