



The Journey

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LET LOVE GROW IN NICARAGUA

Food insecurity. Political unrest. Climate change threatening the viability of crops... Imagine all of these things, happening at once. And then, back to back hurricanes arrive. In November of 2020 two consecutive hurricanes--Eta and Iota-- impacted the same regions of Central America, with Nicaragua experiencing some of the most severe impact. Flooding destroyed the bean crops, contaminated water wells, destroyed latrines, and left thousands of families homeless. People moved to emergency shelters in schools and churches, but thousands didn't have time to evacuate or preferred not to leave their homes for security reasons or fear of COVID-19.

The good news is that hurricanes didn't stop the work of our partners, or the ongoing food security programs that Week of Compassion has supported for years. In very concrete ways, these programs are part of the disaster recovery process. Through a partnership with Growing Hope Globally, CWS, and local partner CIEETS, Week of Compassion has been invested in the region through relationships--and life-changing development projects-- for many years. This partnership works to empower 220 families in eight communities to thrive despite adversity.

Your continued support is helping these farmers plant new types of crops, find new ways of earning extra money, and sustainably care for the natural resources around them. René Bermúdez and Iris Mercedes Canales are active participants in the CWS-supported program, taking on new initiatives and enterprises. They are working hard to ensure that their family always has enough to eat and a way to earn a living. Rene is raising stingless Melipona bees, which produce medicinal honey that he can sell. He learned about poultry raising and has started raising chickens – and now has forty hens that produce eggs, plus another 140 that he is preparing to sell! Iris says that her family's nutrition has improved through the program. They have begun to eat a more diverse diet.

Claudia Palacios is a single mom who has struggled to take care of her children. Even though she owns a little bit of land, she has lost several harvests to the effects of climate change. "A lot of people in this community are in the same situation. When it rains too much, the crops die from disease or they're washed away. When it doesn't rain enough, they dry up. Either way, us farmers lose everything." But now, Claudia is participating in the CWS-supported farming program. She's planted beans and is working with program technicians to improve her harvests.

Love Grow continued next page...

We have resumed our **9:30 a.m. Sunday in Sanctuary worship service**. The service will be broadcast live to the church parking lot and streamed on line (see next page for streaming information).

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, February 25**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35802
Telephone: 256-881-0150 **Leave a message.**

...**Love Grow** continued.

“We’re here, thanks be to God. And we are blessed by CIEETS and CWS with this project. It’s a blessing for us, for El Tigre, San Gregorio, Los Ranchos, San Vicente, San Antonio, all of us here. God willing, we’ll continue this work for the benefit of everyone. We are getting big changes in the weather, the climate, the rain is irregular... CIEETS has helped us a lot to adapt to the changes. We can’t rely on the sort of agriculture that we used to rely on.” ~Pastor Adan García Díaz of the Nazareno Church in El Tigre.

In Rio Coco, in direct response to the hurricanes, Week of Compassion and our partners helped provide immediate relief including food aid, hygiene kits, psychosocial support and COVID-19 protective equipment to more than 1,000 families in shelters and communities that could not evacuate. The recovery phase (which began in January ‘21) supports house repairs, livelihood and agriculture recovery and rehabilitation of damaged water and sanitation systems and infrastructure. The ongoing programs of our partners Growing Hope Globally will provide the solid foundation upon which these targeted projects will be implemented in the coming months.

Thankfully, none of the training centers was severely damaged by the hurricanes and in fact, they also played a role in the early recovery process. Carolina Hernandez, project manager, shared that after the hurricanes, many farmers and former training participants regrouped and gathered spontaneously at community centers to comfort each other and listen to one another. This kind of community sharing is part of what resilience is about.

Your gifts to Week of Compassion help support immediate relief from the impact of the hurricanes and COVID-19, as well as the ongoing development projects that make communities stronger and more resilient in the face of disaster. Your support empowers families to build a sustainable life – without hunger or thirst – as they learn new ways to produce food and income. **Please note “Week of Compassion,” for any amount, on your check or PayPal donation to First Christian Church.**

Please give generously.

WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS

Not Published Online

CONDOLENCES to the family of Jo Thomason who passed on Saturday, February 20.

We are temporarily publishing, as space allows, the prayer concerns that are normally listed in the Sunday bulletins. **Concerns are listed for one month unless we receive an update.** Long term prayer concerns are published monthly in the *Journey*. Send requests to publisher@fcc-hsv.org or call the church office at 256-881-0150 to leave a message. **Please notify the Pastors or the church office if you are going to the hospital and would like to be contacted**

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS
Fairhope Christian Church, Fairhope, AL

ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES
We have resumed in-person worship service but you may still stream live at 9:30 am on Sundays (or watch previous services anytime) on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhugUnUhCKw
You may also stream services live on Sundays at 9:30 am, watch previous services, videos for children, and special activities on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/fcchsv/videos
Finally, stream services at 9:30 am on Sunday at: www.twitch.tv/fcchsv



WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

MF 2 and “Momma Phyl” are happy to announce the upcoming wedding of Trey Leonard and Abby McKibben on May 8 in Starkville, MS. The interesting story of this young couple can be found on theknot.com/McKibbenLeonard. May the foundation Trey gained from his years with the youth at FCC be a guiding light in this next phase of life.

ECM REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER AND FALL 2021

- Current Students - February 22-24
- Sibling of Current Students - February 25
- First Christian Church Members - February 26
- Remaining openings will be available to the public on first come first served basis starting on March 1.

Contact Susan Cooley at 256-881-4291 or susan@fcc-hsv.org for more information.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS



Not Published Online



COMMUNITY FREE DENTAL CLINIC

The joint outreach focus for Community Outreach and Christian Women’s Ministry during the month of February is the **Free Dental Clinic**, available to low income, elderly and veteran residents of Madison County. Income levels must be equal to, or less than, 150% of the national poverty level. Clients must be 19 years of age or older. The clinic is located at 2341 Whitesburg Drive, and appointments are required. Local emergency rooms are unequipped to attend dental emergencies. Thereby the need for extractions, for many local residents living in poverty, can be accomplished with appointments at this Free Clinic.



The typical client might be a person suffering from a compromised tooth, possibly broken or infected. The general health is greatly affected by oral health making it even more important to address the oral issues. Be it a young mother trying to care for her family or an elderly veteran, the community free dental clinic is available to provide extractions and education for improved oral health. Currently, a retired dentist is on site two days a week for appointments.

CWM and Community Outreach are seeking financial assistance for the Community Free Dental Clinic, during February, to aid the continued operation of this vital service provided for the eligible residents of Madison County. If you are able, please consider a donation. In order to give, earmark your donation to First Christian Church for the Community Free Dental Clinic by whatever your preferred means of giving might be.

Rev. Linda Lou Curwood (former youth minister at FCC and the wife of a former interim pastor of FCC) will be turning 80 on March 12. We are encouraged to send her cards to help her celebrate. The Curwoods’ address is 909 Quarter Horse Court, Lexington, KY 40503. We are planning a few surprises for mom’s birthday as we encourage friends and family to help us celebrate from afar.

Thanks for your consideration,
Anna Hope Curwood Wills

CONGRATULATIONS to Kyle and Carrie German Love on the birth of their son, Amos Glenn Love, on Friday, February 12.

BLINKERS

by Kaji Douša

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. - Psalm 51:1-3 (NIV)

I remember the first time I saw them. It was my premier trip to Central Park, and I must have been ... elementary-school aged? I was awed by the majestic creatures dragging carriages behind them.

All of this was new to me.

What was especially curious to me, though, were the cups over the horses' eyes. "How could they see?" I wondered.

Someone responded, "They see what their drivers need them to see." Without distraction. I've been told they're called "blinkers." The form of tack that are cups for horses' eyes, focusing their attention on exactly what's before them. Nothing to the left or to the right.

There might've been a time when I would have written a devotional about how helpful blinkers could be. How I wish I could stay focused on the path and not have cause to turn my head, lest I should stumble or wander off path.

But then, how would I know my transgressions? If I am only willing to look straight ahead, if I can only listen to the news source I most trust, if my faith relies on blinders ...

... then how will I ever know the sins from which I need a cleanse?

Prayer

Wash away my iniquity, O Lord. For only in my awareness can I be delivered, by your mercy. Amen.



THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is in honor of Scarlett Green's first birthday by grandparents Rick & Kay Shrout.

Sanctuary Service Protocols

- In person worship is at 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday school classes, the nursery, children/youth gatherings, coffee, and other hospitality services are currently suspended.
- While FCC and the State recommendations are good benchmarks, we invite all people to worship with us based on their comfort level. Virtual services are offered (facebook.com/fcchsv, twitch.tv/fcchsv, or First Christian Church Huntsville on Youtube) every Sunday.
- **Attendees, including children, will wear face coverings/masks inside the church and practice social distancing (6 feet apart for non-household members) for everyone's safety.**
- Attendance is limited (approximately 75) to the ability to social distance and the service will be broadcast (107.9) to the parking lot in the event of overflow attendance.
- Enter the church through the Bell Tower Garden/Narthex doors. The doors by the church office will be locked.
- Greeters will provide hand sanitizer to all who enter and provide masks for those who have not brought their own.
- Ushers will seat people down the center/side aisles
- No choir/congregational singing.
- Following the service, rows will **leave by the side aisles** with the east aisle exiting through Family Services and the west aisle through the Narthex doors. (There will be directional signs.)
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- Please, **no congregating indoors** before or after service - social distancing outdoors.
- **Anyone with any symptoms will remain home and celebrate virtually for at least 14 days.**
- **Notify the church office immediately if you develop symptoms after attending a service.**