

MÜNC

OUR MISSION IS TO GLORIFY GOD AND MAKE DISCIPLES BY GUIDING DISTRACTED PEOPLE TO CONFIDENTLY PURSUE THEIR NEXT STEPS WITH JESUS.

ISSUE 10 | SEPTEMBER 2022

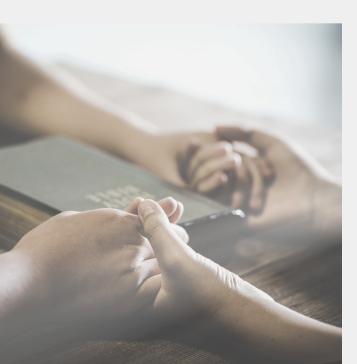
# **Envision Presents**

# MISSION N

AN UPDATE ON THE MISSION EFFORTS SUPPORTED
BY THE GEORGETOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST
ACROSS THE STREET, UP THE ROAD, AND AROUND
THE WORLD







# THE NEXT STEPS

Continued Impact...

Impact is defined as a powerful effect on a situation or person.

We all desire to live a life of positive impact – on our family, our friends, our world. We can achieve this impact both individually and through shared influence.

This church family has made a Kingdom impact in our neighborhood, our state, and around the world through the shared influence of Mission Sunday.

One of the strengths of the Georgetown Church of Christ is the willingness to partner with and launch new ministry initiatives. In previous years GTCOC has been instrumental in launching Brookwood in Georgetown (BiG) and The Key2Free to create impact in our neighborhood. In addition, a partnership with Impact Temple Church began seven years ago with the donation of a commercial refrigerator, helping create a Kingdom impact in our state.

Through the faithfulness to God and their leadership teams, both BiG and Key2Free have been successfully launched for impact in Georgetown. GTCOC has been blessed to partner with these ministries in their early years. Beginning in 2023 GTCOC will shift from financial partnership with these two ministries to promoting their works and providing strategic support. BiG Light will continue to meet in the Family Life Center, and our church family will support annual supply drives and Gala promotion for The Key2Free. The financial partnership with

Impact Church will continue as they reach the marginalized community of East Temple with the good news of Jesus.

As we celebrate the success of previous launches, GTCOC is taking next steps to partner with a new initiative aimed at continued Kingdom impact in our city. Mission 40:13 is a ministry that partners with families of disabled and special-needs children to help them renew their strength by providing respite, refreshment, and holistic renewal. More information on the launch of this new initiative can be found on the following pages.

The international ministries in Mexico and Greece supported through Mission Sunday continue to adapt to the growth and changes in their regions. Gil Sanchez with Casa de la Esperanza, Daniel Napier in Thessaloniki, and Matt Gulley in Athens all face opportunities and challenges to their work due to changing demographics. Through their diligence and faithfulness to their specific ministries, Kingdom impact continues to be made among the lost and left children of Anahuac, Mexico and the refugee communities in Greece.

Hopefully the mission updates that follow will provide both encouragement and inspiration:

Encouragement that the mission efforts supported through Mission Sunday are making a significant Kingdom impact.

Inspiration to prayerfully consider how you can make an impact through the shared influence made possible through Mission Sunday.

What is your next step?

Ask yourself these questions as you read these updates: Where is God leading me to go? What gifts has he given me to share? Who is he calling me to love?

You may be the answer to prayer for one of the ministries you are about to read about.

One of the ways we can all participate in these mission efforts is by prayerfully and strategically setting aside funds for Mission Sunday on October 2, 2022. All financial support for these mission efforts comes from Mission Sunday giving. Your funds will provide vital resources for these ministries to continue reaching those who need what only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can provide.

What is the next step God is calling you to take?

# MISSION 40:31





Mission 40:3I is a ministry that partners with families of disabled and special-needs children to help them renew their strength by providing respite, refreshment, and holistic renewal to make the entire family whole. The ministry is inspired by Isaiah 40:3I - "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

Billy and Angie McMahan believe they have been called to this develop and lead this ministry. Both have worked with special-needs families for many years and have a wealth of experience and knowledge. GTCOC has experience working with Billy when he was the director of BiG Light. We are honored to partner with them as they minister to families and coordinate the next steps of this ministry.

The first steps of Mission 40:3I will focus on respite care for the caregivers of those with special needs. Respite care will include three programs.

First, a quarterly Parents' Night Out programs to give caregivers essential time for themselves. Second, Friday Fun Days will provide weekly respite care opportunities for caregivers; since Brookwood in Georgetown (BiG) operates Monday through Thursday, it is important to offer a Friday program to help parents work a full week to provide for the financial needs of the family. Third, Mission 40:31 will also offer individual short-term respite care for families who need an extra helping hand.



Once respite care is established, other next steps include finding ways to both refresh and renew the entire family emotionally, physically, maritally, and spiritually. Retreats will eventually be offered for families to reconnect as a family unit, as spouses, and with God; worship gatherings designed specifically for these families and their unique needs will also be incorporated.

Taking care of a child with disabilities is extremely taxing; Mission 40:31 desires to help lighten the load of responsibility from caregivers' shoulders - for a night, a day, or a weekend. In order to meet the growing need for respite care in Georgetown, training will be provided for other respite care workers in the area.

The ultimate goal of Mission 40:31 is to walk alongside these families, helping them care for their special-needs children while offering support, encouragement, and relief. While providing for these physical needs, the Mission 40:31 team aims to exemplify and share the good news of the Jesus.

#### What are your Next Steps?

Connect and Encourage:
Billy McMahan
billymac073 | 74@gmail.com
Angie McMahan moonday70@gmail.com

#### Engage:

- Facilitate or Volunteer at future Parents'
   Night Out events and Friday Fun Days
- Email Billy or Angie if you are interested in training to be a respite care worker
- Partner in prayer









Impact Temple Church continues their mission of transforming and restoring the lives of the marginalized in Temple through sharing the Good News of Jesus and providing opportunities to live out that Good News. Impact isn't a church that serves the homeless; the church is building community together as the Body of Christ with the homeless to create a Kingdom impact in the East Temple community. Those in the homeless and marginalized community are integral to the success of the mission of Impact Temple Church.

GTCOC continues to partner with Impact by supporting Deni Howard in her frontline work with the homeless and marginalized. In the last year Deni took an online grant-writing class so funds can be sought for ongoing outreach into the East Temple community. She is also giving thought to next steps in her education as she continues to learn more about the needs of the marginalized community and which skillsets best meet those needs. Deni's tireless and fierce passion to teach, serve, and advocate for those who she says "stole her heart" is a constant inspiration.

Cooling and warming centers at the Impact building continue to provide relief from seasonal weather. GTCOC provided much needed sleeping bags during extended times of frigid temperatures last winter. Bible studies and the sharing of Biblical principles often take place when people gather to seek shelter from the weather.

Next step planning include efforts to adapt other homeless aid models to work in Temple. Two other models are being examined and explored:



- Paul and Bill Painter recently traveled with Deni and another Impact pastor to Lubbock to learn more about the Open Door project. The success of Open Door in transitioning the chronically homeless to housing using new processes has inspired the team at Impact to consider how this approach could work in Temple.
- Based on the Clubhouse Model, the newly launched Impact Clubhouse uses a holistic approach to equip those struggling with mental illness, addiction, and challenging life situations. Guided by peers with similar life experiences the Clubhouse encourages members to belong to a growing community and experience relationship, recovery, and life restoration.

The trust Impact Church has built within the marginalized community, along with the resulting success in changing lives, has been recognized by the City of Temple. Local officials have asked Impact Church to partner with other organizations and city agencies to develop and implement a comprehensive program of homelessness recovery. This is an exciting yet daunting task for the leadership at Impact Church; their prayer is that these joint efforts result in comprehensive solutions for people to move from social-displacement into secure and stable "home-making".

Many at GTCOC have traveled to Temple on fifth Sundays to worship and share a meal with the Impact Church family. The annual Thanksgiving meal will take place November 20. Please give consideration to worshipping with Impact Temple in the future and/or preparing and serving the Thanksgiving meal.



#### What are your Next Steps?

Volunteer Email Deni Howard at fdivermom9@gmail.com

Connect
Facebook: @ImpactTemple
Website: ImpactTemple.com

Engage
Worship on 5th Sundays
Serve through the Thanksgiving Meal on November 20
Partner in prayer



# A HOUSE OF HOPE

Casa de la Esperanza (House of Hope) continues to make an impact within both the city of Anahuac and the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. The government agencies and many individuals who regularly interact with Casa regard it as the best childcare facility in the state. Staying true to their Christian values has been the driving force of Casa's success and paves the way for next steps.

The Iglesia de Cristo Church has been open for I8 months! The church continues to develop relationships within the Anahuac community by teaching the good news of Jesus and attending to essential physical needs. The church building and grounds continue to be developed for Kingdom uses. A next step includes ongoing planning for a School of Biblical Training in partnership with the International Biblical Institute of Texas. This two-year program will be for men and families with housing available in the dorms and duplexes on church grounds. Field work would consist of a range of activity including outreach in the community, teaching bible class, working with local schools and youth, outreach to rehab and senior centers, working with partnering churches, and providing leadership training.

The need for a School of Biblical Training was precipitated by the unprecedented high level of migration taking place from southern to northern Mexico, mostly to the state of Chihuahua. While migrants are looking for better job opportunities, educational resources, and quality of life available in northern Mexico, their movement presents both an opportunity and challenge for church growth. Iglesia de Cristo is preparing to meet both the spiritual and physical needs of the migrants.

Casa's stellar reputation with local social services continues to pave the way for an expansion of Casa to be established in Chihuahua City; based on Casa's reputation in the community, both the Governor of Chihuahua and local social services are actively encouraging this expansion. This new Casa would expand the number of children cared for in a Christian environment, partner with local churches, collaborate with the School of Biblical Training, and provide the opportunity for another church plant. The director of Casa, Gil Sanchez, attributes this acknowledgement from local officials to Casa's dedication to a Christian foundation and practices.

Creating an environment of discipleship to Christ is a subject of constant attention at Casa. This requires an organizational culture that fully embraces the precepts of Christianity. Gil and the staff at Casa daily strive to meet to individual needs of the children who live at Casa. This includes meeting the physical needs of clothing, housing, and food within an overall environment built on Christian faith and principles. The children of Casa continue to excel in both their educational and spiritual development, with many choosing to follow Christ. Casa is blessed to have I5 baptized youth who participate in leading devotions during the week.









The facilities on property continue to reach full development; they now provide dedicated classroom space, a multi-function space, and 2 infirmaries. Now that the physical spaces are completed, next steps include sourcing equipment and resources for the science Discovery room and the infirmaries. With these expansions the children at Casa will have access to educational resources that will broaden the scope of learning and also allow for medical and dental missions to take place at Casa.

A group of 22 from GTCOC recently served at Casa de la Esperanza. While the opportunity to learn and serve was impactful for those from GTCOC, the impact on the children at Casa is eternal.

"The group visiting from the GTCOC was, as always, an amazing blessing to the Casa children and staff, the church, and our neighbors. The group was so full of energy and love that it would be difficult for anyone to put into words the sum of all the joy taking place throughout the week. We were all deeply grateful for the gift of their presence and service to this ministry." – Gil Sanchez

#### What are your Next Steps?

Connect
Facebook: @casadelaesperanzamexico

Website: ahouseofhope.com
Receive newsletter: send an email to
ahouseofhope@gmail.com

Engage
Plan to visit Casa de la Esperanze in 2023

Partner in prayer

# A Servant's Notes From Casa 2023

by Lauren Venable

Casa de la Esperanza, A House of Hope, a bright light in the hills of northern Mexico and a small community called Anahuac. As soon as you enter the gates of Casa you feel a sense of safety. Maybe it's the high stucco walls or secure gates, but really it's deeper than that. Casa is a safe place that up to 60 children at a time call home. Every face at Casa tells a story, through their smiles, some with their eyes, and others through their scars. Some have been abandoned, while others are there for a short amount of time, but all are being told they are wonderfully made and they each have intrinsic value in the kingdom of God.

The work at Casa is directed by Gil Sanchez. A man who can lead, dream and do. His heart for Casa and helping the next generation of Mexican citizens is greater than you can imagine. Gil has taken Casa from what once was a field and one building; to now a multi building campus, with dorms, education wings, offices, a cafeteria, their very own "Home Depot", a barn full of animals, and more. In December of 2020 Casa was blessed by adding to their leadership staff with the hire of Pepe & Pamela Villicana. Pepe & Pamela have jumped right into the mix at Casa and have been a tremendous blessing to the kids and staff.

Over the past five years our relationship with Casa has grown and developed into a deep friendship. This summer while visiting, Gil reminded me of the story of when the few friends took their paralyzed friend to see Jesus. I sat there with tears in my eyes as he retold me what these friends went through just for a small chance to see Jesus, it was like I had never heard it before. The way he described their love and commitment for one another, and that they were willing to do anything for him to be healed was powerful. In a soft voice he said "you know, Jesus knew the whole time what was going on above him. He kept teaching and a little dirt fell and hit him on the head. He wiped it away, and looked around to see the faces of that crowded room because he knew... something great was about to happen." After Gil finished telling me this story he compared it to our [Georgetown] friendship. That we were designed for friendship like that, we were created for a community of people that would do anything for the other to experience healing. As I walked away, wiping tears from my eyes, that's when it hit me, that was the deeper connection and sense of safety you feel when you enter those gates.

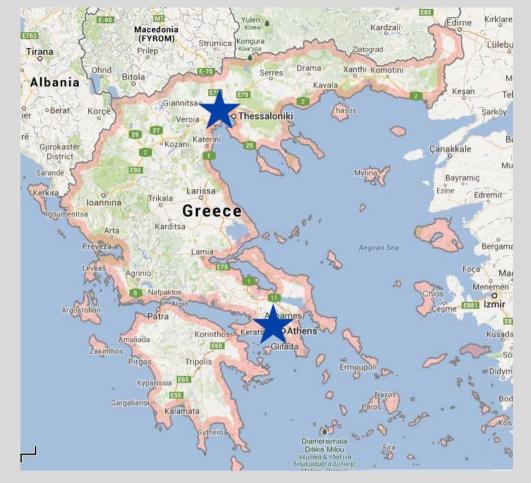
As you walk around Casa you follow intentional pathways lined with stucco walls in the Adobe style. Everything is the color "Casa Peach". If you don't dream in Casa Peach, you must have had your eyes closed the whole time. Silhouettes of children playing, butterflies and other animals painted on the walls. Apple trees full of fruit, clothes hanging to dry, and the occasional goat or calf running by is a common sight. All of these things and more make up this house of hope.

The future for Casa is a bright and big one. In our five years of partnering with Casa de la Esperanza and serving there in the summers we have seen and assisted with many projects. One of the largest was a building being torn down in 2018, built back up in 2019, painted and tiled in 2021, and now this year we watched a movie and ran a successful medical clinic. This education and medical wing will provide discovery classes for kids to learn skills and trades for future jobs. It also provides a place for medical and dental care to be done on campus. Our friendship and partnership with Casa has helped shape the future of many.

Once you step out of the cafeteria and on your way to the dorms, you walk through what will someday be a fully functioning gymnasium. Currently it has a large space to play in when it's cold outside, but mostly is being used for storage. This summer I asked Gil "if you could dream big, what would be a wish list item for Casa?" Instantly he said, "finish out the gym." If we have learned anything from Casa it is to dream big, and we want to boldly say that in the future we can help Casa build a gym! If you didn't know, winter temperatures in Anahuac, Mexico are below freezing. We know how important play is, and when 60 children can't go outside to play, you have to get creative. By finishing out their gym it would give them a safe and warm place to play in the winter months, and a dry place to play during the rainy season.



The dreams are big. The possibilities are endless.



The Georgetown Church of Christ supports two missionaries in Greece - Daniel Napier in Thessaloniki and Matt Gulley in Athens. Both ministries are responding to changes in the refugee communities in Greece. The number of refugees entering Greece are reducing, while the number of refugees moving on from Greece continues to increase; these changes are due to many social and political factors and create ever-changing opportunities and challenges. Working with Christian refugees that remain in Greece provides the opportunity for deeper spiritual formation, especially with those who are called into positions of leadership in their churches and who may one day be leading in other parts of Europe. The ever-widening area that refugee believers are spreading throughout Europe presents challenges for ongoing discipleship development, yet the use of zoom and other technologies helps in continuing relationships that began in Greece.



The history of refugees passing through Greece is long; it is anticipated that numbers entering Greece will rise again in the near future. While the reasons for ongoing refugee movement are heartbreaking, both Daniel and Matt are well-positioned through experience and community to partner with God for Kingdom impact by meeting the spiritual needs of the refugee community.

Opportunities arise throughout the year when Daniel and Matt's ministries overlap. This last year they, along with Greg Dowell, participated in the Refugee Highway Partnership conference in Athens. These shared experiences offer a time to build relationship and discuss the refugee-based ministries in their respective regions of Greece.



### Daniel Napier - Thessaloniki, Greece

As in Paul's day, God has not only called people to Thessaloniki, but also from Thessaloniki, "the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place..." (I Thess. I:8). Daniel currently teaches in a number of churches, schools, and spiritual formation programs across Europe and in Latin America. Those who he is mentoring also evangelize people in many middle eastern nations. As a result, the outer edges of this work reaches places he will never personally see.

Much of Daniel's ministry focuses on developing people for spiritual and ethical

leadership in the movement of those turning to Jesus throughout Europe, many from Islam. He does not want merely to produce more Christians; he intends to foster the church growth the apostle Paul described as developing bigger Christians – communities of persons who are growing into "the full stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:16). A goal is to help ordinary people become quite a lot like Jesus. This is achieved through working with God in developing spiritual stability, depth, and character formation to potential leaders in the Kingdom.

Daniel's work in Thessaloniki continues to have local and global rhythms...



The Cleft in the Rock facility is up and running; its use is already adapting to the changing needs of the refugee community.

- Weekly Bible studies take place over a shared meal. This is a time for building relationships as participants discuss scripture and Christian writings. This gathering is a perfect opportunity to introduce the impact of Jesus on lives during conversations.
- Fitness and weightlifting sessions take place that provide a context for mentoring conversations. Daniel's experience has been that these mentoring conversations often become both evangelistic and discipling opportunities that begin from a shared interest in fitness. He has used this approach in other locations, such as Croatia, and finds that it is adaptable across cultures.
- Daniel's wife, Karly, and other women meet weekly for a focused prayer time. Relationships continue to deepen through this intentional time.



Another local rhythm is the distribution of food and clothes to refugees in the nearby town of Katerini. Daniel partners with a local pastor in purchasing and distributing the essential items; currently there are close to I50 Syrian Kurds and 200 Ukrainians in the area that are served.

Long-term rhythms include cohorts for those that have moved on from Thessaloniki. Cohorts gather in Thessaloniki quarterly for a long-weekend of intensive learning. Each weekend intensive focuses on a different set of ideas, practices, and elements of social identity found in Jesus' teachings. Between the intensive weekends the group reads a book together, practices a different spiritual exercise, and meets on Zoom to process what they are learning. The first cohort is halfway through its two-year plan; a second cohort has also begun. Each cohort consists of around 20 people. These cohorts are made up of people who Daniel mentored before they left Thessaloniki, as well as others throughout Greece who have connections to Daniel through other ministries and who are interested in this deep-dive learning. The applied approach of the cohorts focuses on fostering personal growth into the kind of life Jesus exemplifies.

Next steps include taking the cohort curriculum to other locations in Europe. Due to the portability of the curriculum, Daniel can take it to equip disciples who have relocated to both Western and Eastern European cities. Groups from Poland and North Macedonia have specifically requested that Daniel offer the cohort intensives in their cities. Logistics to provide adequate time and funding for these cohorts is a consideration as options are explored.



Another next step is to provide university level Christian resources to local Jesus followers. This would be achieved by calling upon a range of globally situated friends, who are also students of Jesus, that have special academic and/or ministerial competencies from which others could learn. These special resourcing events would take place at the Cleft in the Rock to bless the church in Greece and beyond. Possible topics for deeper equipping include: The Gospel in Honor-Shame Societies, Introduction to Non-Western Forms of Christianity, Leadership and Character in Paul, and An Introduction to Spiritual Direction.

Daniel and Karly's oldest daughter, Rebeccah, has moved back to the US and is living and working in San Marcos; she is 22 and enjoying her independence. Kristina, I6, is beginning her sophomore year at an International School in Thessaloniki. She's had health struggles with Bar Epstein recently but has been resilient in fighting her way through. Karly continues to learn Greek and works with Daniel at Cleft in the Rock, specifically leading the woman's prayer ministry. A group from GTCOC will be traveling to Thessaloniki in October to learn more about Daniel's ministry and to encourage his family and others he works alongside.

#### What are your Next Steps?

Connect and Encourage:

Daniel - danielaustinnapier@gmail.com

Karly - karlynapier@gmail.com

Send an email to receive Daniel's newsletter: danielaustinnapier@gmail.com

Partner in prayer



# MATT GULLEY - ATHENS, GREECE

In response to discerning the need for deeper spiritual development within the Persianspeaking Christian community in Greece, Matt will work with his established leadership team in a new ministry to meet these spiritual needs. While Hellenic Ministries continues to minister to the physical and spiritual care of Greeks and other people groups in Athens, this new work will be uniquely focused on Persianspeaking people who have left Islam to follow Jesus, with an emphasis on Afghans.

Matt and the team are enthusiastic about pursuing the continuity of existing ministries while also developing new initiatives to increase future impact within this community. The team sees a great need for spiritual development among Persian-speaking leaders and influencers as they grow in their faith, knowledge, and relationships. The areas of spiritual development they desire to emphasize are unity, spiritual health, deeper



discipleship, and the development of personal and pastoral growth. Recognizing that there are others









throughout Europe and North America working towards these same goals, this new work will seek to serve as an international hub for networking with like-minded workers to maximize this global movement.

# "For we walk by faith and not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

Walking by faith has been a tangible reality for Matt and his family during this season of change. Matt has found this time to be both challenging and rewarding as he focuses on winding down his time with Hellenic Ministries and gearing up the next steps towards a new work. These next steps include:

Working with Greg Dowell to expand the discipleship curriculum to three levels as part of the Academy for Spiritual Formation, formerly the Discipleship Training Center (DTC). This work was begun in 2017 and continues to adapt to the every-changing refugee dynamics in Athens. With three class levels a broad range of discipleship topics can be taught; from basic spiritual formation concepts to new believers, to deeper spiritual development of believers who are called to lead in their churches and organizations, to deep dives into Biblical principles and history that are often topics new to Persian-speaking believers.

Development continues of a school for Persianspeakers who are called to a missional life in their country or region of origin. The school is currently completing the first year of a three-year program. Topics covered in the first two modules and summer classes have provided profound revelations to the Afghan students as they deepen their spiritual maturity. Topics have included biblical ethics, spiritual formation, the history of monotheistic religions, with a cross-cultural module planned for this fall. The team sees these modules and training as successful towards the goal of helping students become healthy, effective ministers of the Gospel who are making a Kingdom

impact. It is both exciting and daunting that much of the Kingdom impact may not be seen by everyone participating in the school. While this is an odd earthly concept, it is a common spiritual concept. (I Cor 3:6-9)

A new initiative providing trauma care training for leaders in the refugee community began this summer and will be further developed this fall. Based on UN refugee data, almost 100% of refugees arriving in Greece have faced some form of trauma on their journey. The need for both first-aid and long-term trauma care is immense.

All next steps are new as this work begins and the team comes together in Athens after a brief summer break. Prayers for wisdom are appreciated as Matt leads the team in a September Summit focused on planning and discerning the overall mission of this new work.

The Gulley family spent half the summer working with refugee camps, bible distribution projects, and a refugee conference. Later in the summer they were able to relax with Matt's father when he visited Greece. School preparations have now begun! Ashtyn will begin year 10, meaning more demanding high school level classes, she will begin focusing on required testing and post-graduation plans; Eden begins year 7 and will study subjects that are new to her, she loves gymnastics and all animals; Liam begins year 5 and is excited about life in general and everything sports. Eden is doing well with her health and continues to heal from the damage of Celiac Disease. She suffers flare ups around 3 times a month; your prayers are welcome for continued and complete healing.



#### What are your Next Steps?

Connect and Encourage:

Matthew - matthewcgulley@gmail.com

Nikki - nikkigulley@yahoo.com

Send an email to receive Matt's newsletter: matthewcgulley@gmail.com

Partner in prayer

# USE YOUR PASSION TO MAKE AN IMPACT





We invite you to begin planning for Mission Sunday coming up on October 2, 2022. Our goal is \$100,000 to continue financially partnering with these mission efforts.

All funds given on this day are used to fund the mission efforts outlined in this booklet.

Thank you for being a church family that is passionate about sharing God's saving message in our neighborhood, in our state, and around the world.