

THE THOMAS FAMILY

Serving together since 2016 • Panama

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NASB)

Happy Fall!

We have officially entered fall this month! Even though this year feels like it has flown by, I encourage you to try to live intentionally and enjoy different moments of your day. Whether you are in the middle of doing mundane tasks, or on a new exciting endeavor, pick moments to stop, pray, and thank God for life! Also, I would love to share some highlights from a book about prayer I am currently reading. 1. View your daily prayer time as a relationship with God and not some legalistic duty or discipline. 2. Make an absolute commitment to consistently spend significant time alone with God in uninterrupted prayer. 3. A powerful prayer life requires the "balanced practice" of all five types of prayer: 1) Praise, thanksgiving, and worship; 2) Confession and repentance; 3) Petition and supplication; 4) Intercession; and 5) Meditation, such as listening prayer and reflection.

I hope you find these three foundations of a powerful prayer life encouraging!

Progressing Plans

Our plans are coming along nicely. Our architect is finishing up the plans needed to submit for pre-approval. Once the approval is in place, this basically gives us the green light to submit all the technical drawings. Once the technical drawings are approved we can apply for the construction permit. We have had many meetings to try to determine the best ways forward. The recent presidential election here brought with it a new government and a whole new set of rules to the permit process. This has delayed many projects, as people are trying to abide by the new rules and guidelines for submitting paperwork and obtaining approvals. Even something as simple as the duration of a construction permit is affected with all the changes (under the past administration a construction permit was two years, now it has been shortened to just one year). As I have learned more about this process, it became more and more apparent just how much red tape there is!



Short-Term Mission Team

We were thrilled to host a short-term mission team from a church in New Jersey. Eleven people, both parents and children, participated in this family-oriented trip. They helped with a local ministry that we partner with to feed children and share the gospel. The children on the team made special goodie bags filled with treats and thoughtful handwritten Bible verses. They also helped to work on the Abraham Project Panama property to help clear out some of the debris. With the size of the property that we have and it being rainy season, it is a big task to regularly maintain. So, it was a blessing having so many hands on deck to help us. As a family, we were blessed to have them come to serve alongside us for a few days. We are always so grateful and happy when people come down to visit!

Family Updates

Noah officially started Pre-K 4 at the end of August! As a mom, I have felt a mixture of feelings both sad and excited. I am sad not to have him at home with us for seven hours of the day, but excited for him to be challenged in new ways academically and especially socially! He has been motivated more than ever to learn and practice Spanish more since all his classmates speak it fluently. We would so appreciate prayers for this new normal to which we are still acclimating. The transition, overall, has gone smoothly, but as parents, it is new territory for us as well as navigating the school's rules, protocols, etc. As for Ezra, he turned three years old on September 4th! Our baby boy is getting so big indeed! I remember with Noah that somewhere around this age, he lost his cute baby face and chubby cheeks. It's a bittersweet thought knowing my baby boy will soon look like a big boy! Also, he officially started homeschooling again with me. Last year, I did my made-up version of homeschooling with him and with Noah, I used a free Christian homeschooling curriculum which I loved. This new school year I have been going over the Christian curriculum with Ezra and he has thoroughly enjoyed it! As for Esther, we are actively helping her to work those muscles to promote crawling! She seems to understand the concept but we haven't consistently found the right motivation for her! Prayers for our family as a whole would be appreciated during this new season of school!



Last but not least, we have been hosting Stephen's younger brother, Luke! He has Down Syndrome, and Stephen has been begging to have Luke stay with us for a while. He has been a joy and such a great help to our family! Our boys have loved having their uncle around and its been so sweet seeing our kids relationship growing stronger with him every day. If you follow my in-laws' newsletters, Stephen Sr. and Georgiana (they serve as missionaries in Costa Rica), then you may know that Luke has had some issues with his knees and has had several falls. He's experienced a few falls here in Panama while staying with us. We ask you to keep him in your prayers as well, specifically for healing of his knees. Thank you again for all your continued

prayers for our family!

We would like to close by asking you: How can we pray for you? How can we stand in the gap for you or your family and help fight alongside you through prayer? Are you or a loved one sick, discouraged, or hurting in some way? Let us pray for you. Email us at stephen.jr@cimissions.org and kendra.t@cimissions.org.

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

- Stephen, Kendra, Noah, Ezra, & Esther Lily

Support

Thank you for partnering with **Stephen Jr & Kendra Thomas** in seeing His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven! Thank you for your gifts and prayers.

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