

THE THOMAS FAMILY

Serving together since 2016 • Panama

*"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on My behalf."
—Micah 5:2*

Holiday Season, Here We Come

It feels quite special when November 1st comes around marking the beginning of the holiday season. There is nothing quite like the end-of-the-year festivities. I love that though we celebrate two holidays that can be easily secularized by society, the very foundations of them are rooted in Christianity. Giving thanks is a good practice for anyone, but designating a whole day to specifically stop and express gratitude is a beautiful thing. Additionally, celebrating a time of cheer and giving gifts out of love goes perfectly with a time of celebrating the birth of our Lord and being given the best gift of salvation through the cross. All that said, nothing can replace the true meaning of Thanksgiving and Christmas, which is giving thanks to God and God alone for all that He has done for us and the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ! Oswald Chambers said it best, "The thing that awakens the deepest fountain of gratitude in a human being is that God has forgiven his sin." No matter what distractions come our way during these upcoming holidays, let us never lose sight of the main reason for this season and that is

JESUS!

Let us be a people who choose daily to give thanks to Him for He is ALWAYS WORTHY of our praises!

Ministry Updates

After several months of working on the plans and making countless decisions, our general plans (*anteproyecto* in Spanish) are near completion! See a photo (below) of what the future Abraham Project Panama (APP) will look like. Also, our two workers, Santiago and Yuli, helped us organize our first community workshop on first aid at their local church on behalf of our ministry. We partnered with a local missionary, who is a registered nurse and works mainly with Indigenous people (fun fact: there are 7 Indigenous groups in Panama). She did an excellent job explaining, demonstrating, and engaging the audience by having everyone put into practice what she taught throughout the workshop. We plan on having many more workshops like this for the community in 2025. This will help us better tweak the workshops we plan on implementing with future parents/guardians of APP and benefit the people attending from impoverished communities. We hope that, in addition to helping the locals learn practical skills, APP will build relationships, share Jesus, and disciple those who attend. Big and exciting things are coming for 2025! Please pray alongside us for all that is to come! For example, we are hoping to start building the children's homes next year!



Family Updates



Stephen and I recently took a vacation, just us two, for the first time in a couple of years. We thoroughly enjoyed our extended time alone together. It was a bit hard for me since I had never been away overnight from Esther and mainly because I am

exclusively breastfeeding still. Leaving my three kiddos may have been hard, nonetheless, the trip was an absolute blessing! It was incredibly restful and we are very grateful to my in-laws, Steve and Georgiana, for taking such great care of our three kids.

As for Noah, he's excelling in Pre-K 4, praise the Lord! The teachers have a notebook which they fill out every day for each student, and on the top section, they mark the mood of the student. Every single day they mark "happy" noting that he is a very happy kid. As a parent, that brings me joy and peace of mind knowing that, in general, he is enjoying his time there and learning new things every day while cultivating friendships with his peers! The Lord is good!

As for Ezra, he is still absolutely loving homeschooling with me; which I am too! He is so eager and hungry to learn that he always asks, "Mommy, can we do Bible school?" The other day of homeschooling was filled with extra fun activities, and later he told me at

dinner, "Mommy, today has been the best day ever!" That also brings my heart so much joy.

On a different note, during a regular check-up on Ezra, the doctor noticed something off and asked us to get an ultrasound first and then see a specialist. We recently saw that specialist, who informed us that Ezra will have to undergo surgery. It is a one-hour procedure, and he will have to go under anesthesia. Recovery will last about three weeks. We ask for prayers over our three-year-old boy, that all goes well before, during, and after the surgery and that the problem is resolved once and for all. Thank you in advance for your prayers!

Finally, my baby girl is now ten months, and getting too close to turning one year old! I have cherished my time with that sweet girl. She is such a happy and content baby that she has had no desire to crawl whatsoever! Thankfully, though, with persistent exercises and the right motivation she has begun to crawl, slowly but surely. Ezra was a delayed crawler too, but the Lord is good and we are grateful to have three healthy and happy kids!



Prayer

To end our final newsletter of the year, I would like to ask one last time this year: brother or sister, how can we pray for you? Let us come alongside you this holiday season in the privilege we are given daily of communicating directly with our Creator. We are always ready and willing to hear any of your petitions that we can bring together before our Lord.

Lastly, we want to say THANK YOU so much for being a part of our journey here in Panama! You matter to us and we are thankful for you! We hope you have an amazing and blessing time with loved ones and... HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE THOMAS FAMILY!

Support

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

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.

To stand with **The Thomas Jr Family** financially, you can give online at cornerstoneinternational.org/panama/ or make your check out to Cornerstone Int'l, memo **Panama - Thomas**, & mail in enclosed envelope.


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