

On the Journey

Francis

The first time I visited Shena in the Philippines, I asked her if there were exceptionally poor people in her village. She told me that there were, that every village has people who live in shacks and have very little to eat. I told her I wanted to visit some of them. And we did. But before we visited them, Shena and I went to a store and bought several bags of groceries and a sack of rice for each of them. One of the people we visited was Francis.

Francis was extremely poor, that was obvious to me from the moment I first saw him. A tall, very thin man, dressed in rags, callouses on his hands and feet, scars covered his malnourished body, unshaven, missing most of his teeth. I don't know if Francis' feet ever had a pair of shoes on them or not. Francis has four children, but his wife abandoned him and their children because they were so poor. She had hoped for a better life, now Francis does what he can to feed and care for his children. Poor Francis does the best he can, hiring himself out as a day laborer to work in rice fields or climb coconut trees to shake out a few coconuts. But laborers are abundant, and work is scarce.

We visited Francis at his home. The "house" had no solid walls, only a cloth that wrapped around four wooden poles, one at each corner. The thin cloth offered a bit of privacy, but very little protection from the wind and rain that frequent the Philippines. No electricity, no running water (except when it rained and the roof leaked), no bathroom, the ground was the floor. The roof consisted of a few pieces of tin, but you could see light through it, which meant that when it rained, it leaked. Every day Francis gathers sticks and builds a fire to cook the meager food he has found for himself and his children for that day. We took Francis a sack of rice, some fish, some eggs, noodles, and some other food items so they would have food for a few days. I asked Francis if he had a pair of shoes, and he said that he did not. The next day we bought him a pair of flip-flops. He said he would save them for Sunday and for special occasions, and that he was not accustomed to wearing anything on his feet.

I enjoy doing this kind of thing, helping poor people. God has blessed me, and I endeavor to bless others as I can. Francis was very grateful for the food and for our visit. He thanked us, but more importantly, with tears, he poured out his heart in thanksgiving to God. I could tell that Francis prayed for food regularly. When he prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread," it was because he didn't have food in the house and was asking God for food for that day, now when God provided food for several days, tears ran down Francis' face and his heart overflowed in thanksgiving to God.

A couple days later, Francis came looking for me, and he found me. He brought me a chicken as a gift. I suspect it was the only one he had. But he wanted to give me a gift, and a chicken was all he had. I really did not want the chicken. That poor chicken was as skinny as Francis was. And besides, what were we going to do with a chicken? Soon we would be on an airplane coming back to America, and we certainly could not bring a chicken with us on the plane. Can you imagine if we showed up at the airport with a chicken? "Do we check that in or carry it on?" But more importantly, I knew Francis' children needed the eggs or the chicken much more than I did. How could I take this chicken when his family needed it so much more than I did?

But I accepted the chicken, and did so with thanksgiving, and this is the reason I did. This chicken was probably the most valuable possession Francis owned. He wanted to give it to me as an expression of his deep gratitude. The chicken was not just a chicken any more. It became something sacred because it was now an expression of love and gratitude. And now that I think about it, Francis gave me far more than I gave him. I gave him from my excess, but Francis gave me from what he needed to live. Francis gave sacrificially. I gave from my great abundance. Francis gave because his heart was moved with gratitude, and he could not have done less. I

BIRTHDAYS

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|-----------------|-------|
| Gerald Kauffman | 11/3 |
| Ruth Beasley | 11/5 |
| Ellen Bontrager | 11/5 |
| Sonya Miller | 11/5 |
| Leah Bontreger | 11/8 |
| Luke Schrock | 11/8 |
| Merle Mullet | 11/13 |
| Delbert D Yoder | 11/14 |
| Adeline Graber | 11/20 |
| Phillip Keller | 11/20 |

*First Mennonite Church,
PO Box 508
Middlebury IN 46540
574-825-5135*

*Our mission is to
extend grace, build
peace, and share
love within and
beyond our faith
community*

Office Hours

*Pastor Phil
Tuesday 9:30a—1:30p
Thursday 1:00p—6:00p*

*Business Office
Monday and Tuesday
8:00a—5:00p
and Fridays by chance*

*The church office is
closed on Wednesdays*

gave because..., well because of compassion, I do care about the poor, but also because it makes me feel good. I still had a lot left over after I gave. Francis didn't.

In a few weeks we will be celebrating **Thanksgiving**. I am glad that we have a day set aside for giving thanks. We would all be far poorer than Francis if it were not for God's gracious gifts that He continually lavishes on us. Should there not be an outpouring of gratitude to God for all He does for us? There is a kind of gratitude that flows out of the heart and results in an outpouring of praise to God and compels one to give the best they have in response. That kind of gratitude is a very sacred thing. And that kind of gratitude seems to me to be quite different from just being thankful for all the conveniences and toys we have, now pass the stuffing, please!

This Thanksgiving, as we consider the outpouring of God's great gifts over us, both material and spiritual, and consider how poor we would be without God lavishing His gifts on us, I hope there will be a great outpouring of gratitude to God this Thanksgiving, and that we will be truly grateful from our hearts instead of complaining about how bad things are around us. The truth is that we are a blessed people, blessed more than we can comprehend, because we are God's children, and we live in God's constant care!

Worship

Focus Statement: When Jesus inaugurated his ministry with reading from the Scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth, the people tried to kill him. What was so threatening about Isaiah's vision that the religious crowd would want to kill Jesus? What the people thought they heard Jesus saying that Sabbath morning, was that He was announcing the year of Jubilee. But wasn't Jubilee good news? It certainly was for some, but for others, they could potentially lose much of their wealth, their land, their slaves, and their status. But God had commanded the Israelites to keep a year of Jubilee every 50 years. There were important lessons God wanted to teach the Israelites through practicing Jubilee, but it was something they never did. And if it really was really Jesus' intent to declare the year of Jubilee, then it was threatening to wealthy landowners and to those who owned slaves, and who were owed a lot of money. The opposition to Jesus was not always, and perhaps not frequently, spiritual, much of the time it was economic.

*Sermon Title: "Jubilee –
Good News or Bad News?"*
Text: Luke 4:14-20

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 9:00 AM

(There will be no printed bulletins and Please DO NOT sign the attendance sheets)

Call to Worship
Worship Songs
Sermon
Congregational Sharing and Prayer
Song
Sending Prayer
Dismissal

Announcement: You can now join in the live stream of Sunday sermons by clicking onto You Tube, then typing in FMC INDIANA in the search box. We begin at 9:00 AM on Sunday mornings

All newsletter submissions need to be in to the church office by noon on Monday.

Administration

Stewardship Report for
November 1, 2020:

Money Given to Budget

\$ 3,780.00

Amount Needed Weekly for Budget

\$ 5,417.78

Year-to-date Money Given to Budget

\$ 36,720.00

Amount Needed Yr-to-Date for Budget

\$ 48,760.02

New Format!

You've probably noticed a change in the format for our church newsletter. I (Betty Lou) have had increasing problems with the template that we had been using, until today, when it just refuse to cooperate. This new format is a work in progress, and something that I am putting together this morning completely on the fly, so to speak. There won't be a .doc file to download at least today, as I am using a completely different software program, and I'll need to play around with it more than I have time to do today, in order to do anything more than a .pdf file. Thank you for your patience, this is not something I had planned to do, but then there's Proverbs 19:21—You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail. This verse is actually hanging on my office wall!!

Community Life

Pastor Appreciation Month was celebrated a week late this year, but it was not forgotten. We were pleased to be able to present Pastor Phil and Shena a basket containing tickets to the Ark Adventure, Creation Museum and a check to help cover their travel expenses. Of course we followed the service up with a cookie shower for those in attendance! We really do love you Phil and Shena!

October November Sewing Project – Hygiene Kits – These hygiene kits are for the Christian Aid Mission. Please consider what you may be able to donate to the Sewing from this list!

- 1 bar soap*
- 1 tube toothpaste*
- 2 washcloths
- 1 bath towel (dark color preferred)
- 1 bottle shampoo*
- 1 bottle deoderant *
- (roll on or stick – no aerosol)
- 1 comb
- 1 nail clipper with file
- 1 large handkerchief

* - please check expiration date, items must not expire for eighteen months
All items must be **NEW** due to Customs requirements.

Please drop your item(s) off by November 12!

Outreach

Call for Volunteers! Looking for something to fill a few hours every week? Something that is fun, fulfilling and makes a difference? **Ten Thousand Villages**, our local fair trade store, is seeking volunteers. At Ten Thousand Villages, your work makes it possible for families to eat, children to go to school and have access to health care. To learn more about this great opportunity to help your neighbors around the world, email goshen@tenthousandvillages.com.

Discipling

The Discipleship Commission is reminding you to sign up for the **“C” Groups** if you’re interested! Sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the hall.

Community Life Commission has been anxiously awaiting an end to COVID so we could plan a **fund raiser for Jim and Arlene Schrock**. Jim is unable to work while he is on chemo and they are falling behind close to \$1,000 per month. Since we can’t have a large fund raiser and silent auction event, we are asking each of you to pray about it and give generously for a “virtual fundraiser” for the Schrocks. There are several options for this. You may designate an overage in your offering as such on the second line of your offering envelope; mail in a check designated for Schrocks; drop your gift in the box at the back of the sanctuary; or donate online through our website. <http://www.firstmennonite.net/donate.html> (put the Schrock name in the box with or instead of your envelope number) We hope to stay safe while blessing Jim and Arlene, during this virtual fundraiser which will officially conclude on November 8. If you have any questions, your CLC consists of Denise Johnson, Eva Kurtz, Sonya Miller, Jean Shriner, Janelle Walther and Dave (Patty) Yoder.

POSTPONED—Please note! Jim has postponed his testimony time that was originally scheduled for this Sunday due to the rise in Covid cases. We do want to reschedule this, but nothing on a new date at this time.

Thank you to the congregation for the cards, the gifts, and the many kind words given to us during Pastor Appreciation Month! We cherish all of these and we especially cherish our church family!" - Phil and Shena

fundraising

If you would be willing to take a meal to Jim and Arlene Schrock, please call Jim at 574-370-5795 to arrange a time.

Calendar

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| 11/4 | 9:00 am | Mom’s in Prayer |
| 11/5 | 6:30 pm | Board Meeting |
| 11/6 | 6:30 pm | Ladies Night In |
| 11/8 | 9:00 am | Phil Preaching |
| 11/9 | | Health Department |
| 11/10 | 6:00 pm | Community Life Commission |
| 11/11 | 9:00 am | Mom’s in Prayer |
| 11/11 | 6:30 pm | Food Pantry Advisory |
| 11/15 | 9:00 am | Tim Eash Preaching |
| 11/18 | 9:00 am | Mom’s in Prayer |
| 11/22 | 9:00 am | Phil Preaching |
| 11/23 | | Health Department |
| 11/25 | 9:00 am | Mom’s in Prayer |
| 11/26 | | Fellowship Hall Reserved |
| 11/28 | | Fellowship Hall Reserved |

All Calendar Events are subject to change.