



Evangelical Friends Mission

January 2021 Prayer Letter

www.friendsmission.com
efm@friendsmission.com
303.421.8100

Our purpose and passion is to fuel a worldwide movement of people who seek first the kingdom of God, planting churches that live and die to carry out the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment.

Deuteronomy 18:4

“You shall give him the first fruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep.”



As we look forward to 2021, our prayer is that we look forward to what new journeys the Lord has in store for us and what new “First Fruits” will we deliver this year?

2020 has been a challenge to us in many ways: personal, physical, and spiritual. For us, it was the separation from family and friends. Although we could Zoom and see our family and friends, the shared meals and free-flowing conversations, just not the same. Spiritually there is something about physical presence that is enlivening, for instance, a touch of the hand, a hug, or the kiss of friendship and love.

So what does this have to do with the First Fruits in Deuteronomy 18:4? It has to deal with his presence amid challenges. The livelihood projects from 2020 occurred in such a manner that we were not personally present. Normally we would visit the various sites to encourage and share in whatever was taking place, both highs, and lows. Yet, we were able to share the concerns and joys in and through his presence. And in the end, the simple bag of rice from the Capiz Friends Church farming project confirmed this to us. One of the interesting events of bringing the first fruits of the harvest to the temple was the joy of being with so many family and friends that you had not seen and the meeting of new friends. This has shown us that we can take joy in knowing that we will be together again, in this life or the next. The pictured bag of rice (below) is from Capiz’s first harvest.

Spiritually, we have seen this as a time of increased study of the Word and prayer. Social Media has opened the door for us to be more intimate in praying for one another. Often someone will post the need for prayer; the overwhelming responses are a testament to God’s people sharing these burdens, sometimes with the simple response-Praying. Students in our FEAST school are committed to grow and learn as well. They seized the moment to dive into studies that they might not do otherwise, had there not been a pandemic.

So, as we look forward to 2021 and all the new challenges that we face, our prayer is that whatever you will face, remember that you do so in, and with, the presence of the Lord. Look forward in Joy, to bringing whatever “First Fruits” that will come out of your life; as you bring them to the Altar of the Lord.



Please Pray...

- For the physical opportunity to travel to our various ministry sites soon.
- For new opportunities to bring Glory and Honor to Christ in our lives and ministry.
- For FEAST as we develop new residential and online classes, as well as reproducible resources in Tagalog and English.

From the EFM Office

Praise God...

- For the enthusiastic response to the Christmas Catalog. Over the years that EFM has been doing the catalog it has been fun to watch this type of gift-giving catch on. It's catching on more each year!
- For Maria Giron's availability and willingness to serve as our Administrative Assistant on an interim basis. She will be answering the EFM phone and managing EFM's email account for the next few months. Maria will also continue in her role as Missions Mobilizer for Hispanic Friends.
- For Krista Alvarez who will be assisting Kimberly Mer, our Communications Manager, on a part-time basis. Krista lives in Southern California with her family and has a passion for missions as well as databases, websites, communication systems, etc.

Please Pray...

- For Maria Giron and Krista Alvarez as they learn their new responsibilities.
- For the staff as a whole as we experience changes. As EFM grows, more staff and volunteers are needed in order to increase our capacity to take good care of the missionaries and fields we already have as well as to send new missionaries and open new fields.
- For the formation of new Field Support Teams (FSTs) this year. These are groups of volunteers who help provide member care for our missionaries and assist them with various projects and needs. So far we have FSTs for Bangladesh and Central Africa and a Ministry Care Team for those who teach English in a creative access country in Asia. We want to create many more of these groups in the months and years to come.

EFM Five-Year Goal:

To send 10 new missionary households from North America to launch 5 new fields in the next 5 years.

Praise God...

- For the short videos that have been produced to promote the Five-Year Goal.
- For the regions/yearly meetings that are already planning to host Luke 10 Think Tanks in the coming months. These gatherings will help discern where to send teams to explore potential new fields (called Luke 10 Trips).

Please Pray...

- For the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into the harvest fields.
- For the churches who are sharing the Five-Year Goal videos this month with their congregations. Pray that the Lord will use these videos to stir his people to carry out the Great Commission both at home and abroad.
- For regions/yearly meetings as they organize Luke 10 Think Tanks. These regional think tanks need to be completed in time for the national Luke 10 Think Tank which will meet in June of 2021 to determine at least 10 sites for exploration.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: On Thursday, January 14, there will be a prayer gathering via Zoom in support of the Five-Year Goal. It will take place at 10 AM PST and is available to anyone who would like to take part. Please send a message to efm@friendsmission.com if you would like to participate and we will send you the link for the gathering.

From A. and M. A. Serving in Bangladesh

Please Pray...

- For our Church Multiplication Training Seminar from 15-17 December. Pray that we can develop many multiplier disciples in 2021.
- For our community Christmas party. We have selected 50 communities to share the
- Christmas story with. Pray that the Lord prepare many hearts to receive him.
- For our elder son, Steve, as he is at Barclay College in Haviland, Kansas. His new semester will begin in January. Pray for his studies, good health, and courage to take any challenge to fulfill our master's goal.

From Maria Giron

Missions Mobilizer for Hispanic Friends

Praise God...

- Our whole family tested positive for COVID-19 in December. We are very grateful to God that our son and Maria just suffered from very mild symptoms (loss of taste and smell, and a bit of headaches) Edwin had no symptoms at all! Maria's parents were much worse sick (they are both diabetic) but praise the Lord, they are recuperating now and no longer in danger.
- We are currently coaching four families of new planters in Mexico. We are having our monthly meetings through zoom. Two more families are preparing to go out to plant more churches. We praise God for these opportunities to be a part of extending his kingdom by allowing us to be involved with these families. We are grateful that EFM is providing us with some training so we could be more efficient in coaching newer workers.

Please Pray...

- Please do not forget about VM32 (Vision Mexico 32) Mexico Yearly Meeting project. The Goal is to have a Friends church in every state of Mexico by year 2032. Please pray for more national workers, for sufficient finances to support planters and their families, for Mexico Yearly Meeting's pastors so they would have a sense of ownership to the project and to get involve in praying, supporting, and sending.
- We are so happy to be part of the logistic team for VM32. Please continue praying for our team so we would always be encouraged and in unity to make decisions, and to plan the missing pieces and details of this exciting project.
- On a personal level, our son Edwin Isaac is now starting the process to apply for colleges. We ask you to please pray that God would guide him in every decision he has to make. So that the college he will choose is the right one (and not so far from home - special request from mom) and to open the doors for our son to get enough financial aid and scholarships. He is choosing to go for an engineering degree.

From Samson and Priscilla Retnaraj Serving in Nepal

Praise God...

- All the blessings experienced during Christmas and the time preceding Christmas in December. With the virus on the wane, and the ordinary people getting over the initial fright and nervousness, Christmas was celebrated with the usual liveliness and joy, more so because we can now meet each other face to face carefully following the social distancing norms prevailing in church communities.
- The CHE Trainers were able to get back to their training schedules and meetings and trainings were held in Rautahat, Aurahi (Dhanusha) and Jhurjiure (Chitwan), as also the plans for the Community Learning Centre (CLCs) slowly taking shape
- A few Musahar communities in Aurahi and Cha'pur are regularly in touch with us and have shown great interest in hearing from the Word of God and Jesus. Most of these communities send their children for tuitions and Children's Sunday School.

Please Pray...

- The Lodh community in Tapara tol of Bardia, and Narayan's work among them. The bio-sand filter business and the welding shop business are doing well and will begin repaying their loan on time from January, and having done well in their businesses, we expect them to keep to timelines set for repayment.
- Dinesh Sarki, and Baluram are leaders in Bajhang (Far West District) and after the Discipleship Training and Small Business Development training, they have so far managed to begin 5 other fellowships in Bajhang, one of them being led by Samsher Singh Kami of Talkot (Bajhang). We are planning to have a Vision Seminar for their District and get together at least 15 persons involved in these churches of the Far West Nepal.
- For the month long Discipleship Training in Rautahat in February led by Suleman Rai and helped with the Global Disciples Training curriculum. They plan to prepare 15 leaders in the district to lead all the new fellowships.

From Abe and Diane Bible Serving in Ukraine

Praise God...

- Abe was able to hold the evangelistic workshop in December. It was well attended in spite of the ongoing COVID-19 issues and freezing rain. Everyone made it safely! One man and his team had passed out 1800 New Testaments in one village.
- Abe was able to make a prayer trip around Ukraine covering 3,000 miles in five days meeting with almost all of the provincial superintendents, giving them a small personal gift and just seeking to encourage them during these strange times.
- Diane's eye seems stable after her second surgery. We wait on the Lord for how much vision there will be and whether it will remain stable.

Please Pray...

- For the men who are doing evangelism that they would reap a harvest over this holiday season. Orthodox Christmas is January 7, and the holiday season winds down with a major celebration of the Baptism of Christ January 21. People are always more spiritually open during this time.
- For decisions to be made about the January workshops which, if all goes as planned, should be held on January 14-16.
- That people would find ways to be faithful in reaching out and ministering even in the midst of the chaos of the pandemic.

From Voicu and Ana Marian Serving in Romania

Praise God...

- For the blessings of 2020; the strengthening of our faith; establishing strong relationships with our students; being protected from the worst of COVID-19, being able to continue ministry.
- This season; opportunities to read the Christmas story with every teenager, open doors for discussions and answering their questions.
- God's amazing grace to our family; the blessing of this home and Christ's love to share with those who don't have a family, especially during holidays.

Please Pray...

- Continued protection from illness; divine guidance for our children Christina and John; clear direction in 2021 every step of the way.
- Special wisdom ministering to young adults and couples with small children; maintaining relationships with former students, all for God's glory.
- Salvation of young men and women who'd become workers in the harvest; God's provision for future missionaries in these villages.

From Tony and Agi Frei Serving in Hungary

Praise God...

- We prepared about 180 Christmas packages for the children in the mission. We visited Ozora, Kölked, Majs, Bogyzsló, Komló, Pécs, Budapest, etc. We gave them more than 700 calendars gifts while keeping safe.
- As for me, my quarantine is over, and I am feeling better. Thank you for your prayers.
- My daughter Betti, also prepared gifts on her own. She did it with some unbeliever mothers, and they gave these presents for to a home. It was a great testimony.

Please Pray...

- Our Pastor of Kölked, Józsi Bácsi, was in bad physical and spiritual condition. His family is abroad, so they decided to place him in an old people's home next to Kölked. He feels better now, and he would like to serve God in that place.
- Some people in our mission got COVID-19. Most are fine, but a young man in our group, Attila, has to quarantine with his family till Christmas.
- Susan and Joseph's daughter, Enikő, got to know an unbeliever young lady in the hospital when she gave birth to her baby in May. This young lady also gave birth to her baby boy and they are friends. The baby, Theo, has a tumor in his brain and may need chemotherapy in the new year. Please pray for this little boy.

From David Thomas EFM Whole-Life Discipleship

Praise God...

- For the church world-wide "standing in the gap," interceding on behalf of their people, their communities, and their nations for God's purposes through this time to be accomplished – that his Kingdom come, and his will be done around the world!
- For Holy Spirit's work and for a world-wide softening of hearts! Praise God for many believers growing deeper in their relationship with Christ, and for many coming to know Christ for the first time! Praise God for the coming waves of awakening and for a great harvest of people coming into his kingdom world-wide!

Please Pray...

- For deeper intimacy with Christ for our leaders and colleagues around the world. Fruitful ministry comes out of our "abiding in the vine." Pray people take advantage of this COVID-19 pause, a "selah" moment, a time to grow in their intimacy with Christ.
- God is never late! May he accomplish all his purposes changing hearts and bringing as many people as possible back into right relationship with himself!
- For believers around the world to come to know God as Jehova Jirah the one who provides for their needs! May he use his people to generously reach out to their neighbors in need.

Praise God (Thailand-Lahu)...

- For, Ja Bo, our D4D leader in Ja Taw who has been visiting village families in their homes, praying for them and sharing a Bible telling lesson. Thank God for discussions on what their village could look like if the Kingdom of God came among them transforming every area of life.
- For the freedom to visit church and community members in their homes.

Please Pray (Thailand-Lahu)...

- For Solomon, Yosapa, Chalee, Ben and as they train up new team members in D4D lessons.
- For Solomon, Yosapa, and Ben as they mentor Ja Bo and the headman of Ja Taw. These two have been visiting and encouraging families in their village and in the neighboring Ba Mo village. Pray for good relationships to be built and for encouragement for these families who are beginning to imagine what a transformed village might look like.
- For Mo Pa working in the village of Ja Sa Pa to have wisdom as he encourages a couple families in their young church. Pray for God to bring the headman (Ja Sa Pa- a former drug trafficker) and his children's families to repentance and to a right relationship with God!

Praise God (Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo (Uvira and Goma)...

- For leaders rethinking how pastors can best serve their churches and support their families when the income from the church is insufficient to support them. Thank God for many leaders growing through D4D in being better stewards of their resources to better support their families.

Please Pray (Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo (Uvira and Goma)...

- For healing for Friends Church (CEEACO) Superintendent, Lusungu who is hospitalized in Burundi after a prostate and bladder surgery. Pray for strength, healing and encouragement!
- Continue praying for peace up in the High Plateau in the Fizi, Uvira and Itombwe sectors between various fighting groups. Pray especially for displaced people whose villages have been burned by the Gumino forces. Many have fled to the Middle Plateau. Pray God will raise up leaders of peace among the Christians belonging to the various tribal groups involved. Pray for Christ's Kingdom to come in this situation!
- For the city of Uvira, DR Congo where flooding in April killed many, wiping out whole neighborhoods. With many new refugees fleeing the fighting in the mountains and settling in the Middle Plateau, forests are being cut down, and with the rains more erosion and new flooding is again destroying life and property this past December in Uvira. Pray for wholistic solutions!
- Continue praying for healing for Brad Carpenter's lower back and neck pain. Pray for rest, peace, rejuvenation and

everything they need during this season of recuperation and renewal!

Praise God (Cambodia)...

- Scott gets to promote Kavet literacy among a few key leaders. Up until now, the Kavet language has not been in writing, but in a writer's workshop the Kavet team was able to produce four short, illustrated books about Jesus!

Please Pray (Cambodia)...

- For bright Kavet leaders to emerge who have the gifts and Holy Spirit insight to be able to translate the scriptures well into their own Kavet language. Pray blessing for quick learning as Scott and others train them in literacy. Pray for an excellent Kavet translation team to come together with all the necessary gifts and skills.
- For all the details to come together to eventually produce a Kavet Bible! Pray God would help create the right connections with the United Bible Society and/or Wycliffe to support and spearhead this translation work.