

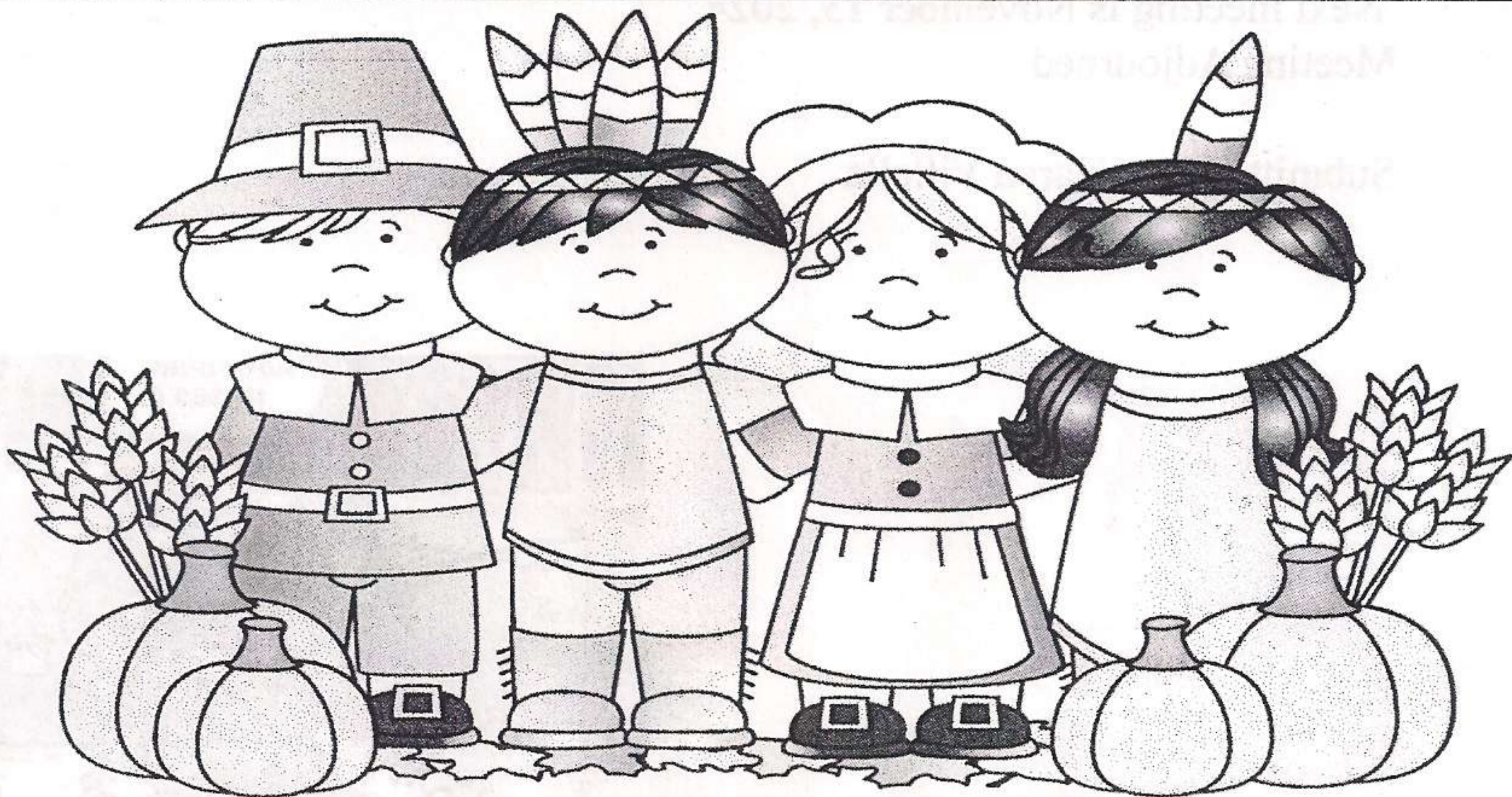
PARADISE LIFE



NOVEMBER, 2024



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3 *Joe & Susan O'Harah	4 Cassidy Reed	5 Brad Bittner <i>FHF Meeting - 7 pm</i>	6 <i>By-Laws Mtg 7 pm</i>	7 Joshua Peace * Matt & Deidre Smith <i>Choir - 7 pm</i>	8	9
10 Loretta Shepler Violet Schreckengost	11 Marie Grape Lisa Keller Rachel Hiles	12 Hannah Moyer Dean Reed <i>Choir - 7 pm</i>	13 Leslie Pifer <i>Consistory - 7 pm</i>	14	15	16 Kevin Vilella
17 Sarah Reed Sierra McCloskey	18	19 Renee Reed <i>Choir - 7 pm</i>	20 Rod Pifer, Jr.	21	22 Rod Pifer, Sr. Myrna Trithart	23 <i>Feeding His Flock Meal - 4:45-6 pm</i>
24 Dan Keller Dale Perry, Sr.	25 *Barry & Carla Fillman	26 <i>Choir - 7 pm</i>	27 Kevin Muth Alexis Sprague <i>Thanksgiving Eve Service - 7 pm</i>	28 Jenalee Smith Brenda Weber John Pifer <i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	29 Patty Burkett Ray Shepler	30 *Richard & Myrna Trithart



SAVE THE DATE: A Sunday School Christmas Program will be performed Dec 15 during the Sunday School Hour.

Paradise Consistory Meeting October 9, 2024

Brenda opened with Prayer.

Those in attendance were: Linda Blosch, Dean Reed, Bob Roy, Brenda Weber, Diane Carlson, and Karen Villella.

The Minutes and Treasurers Reports were read and approved.

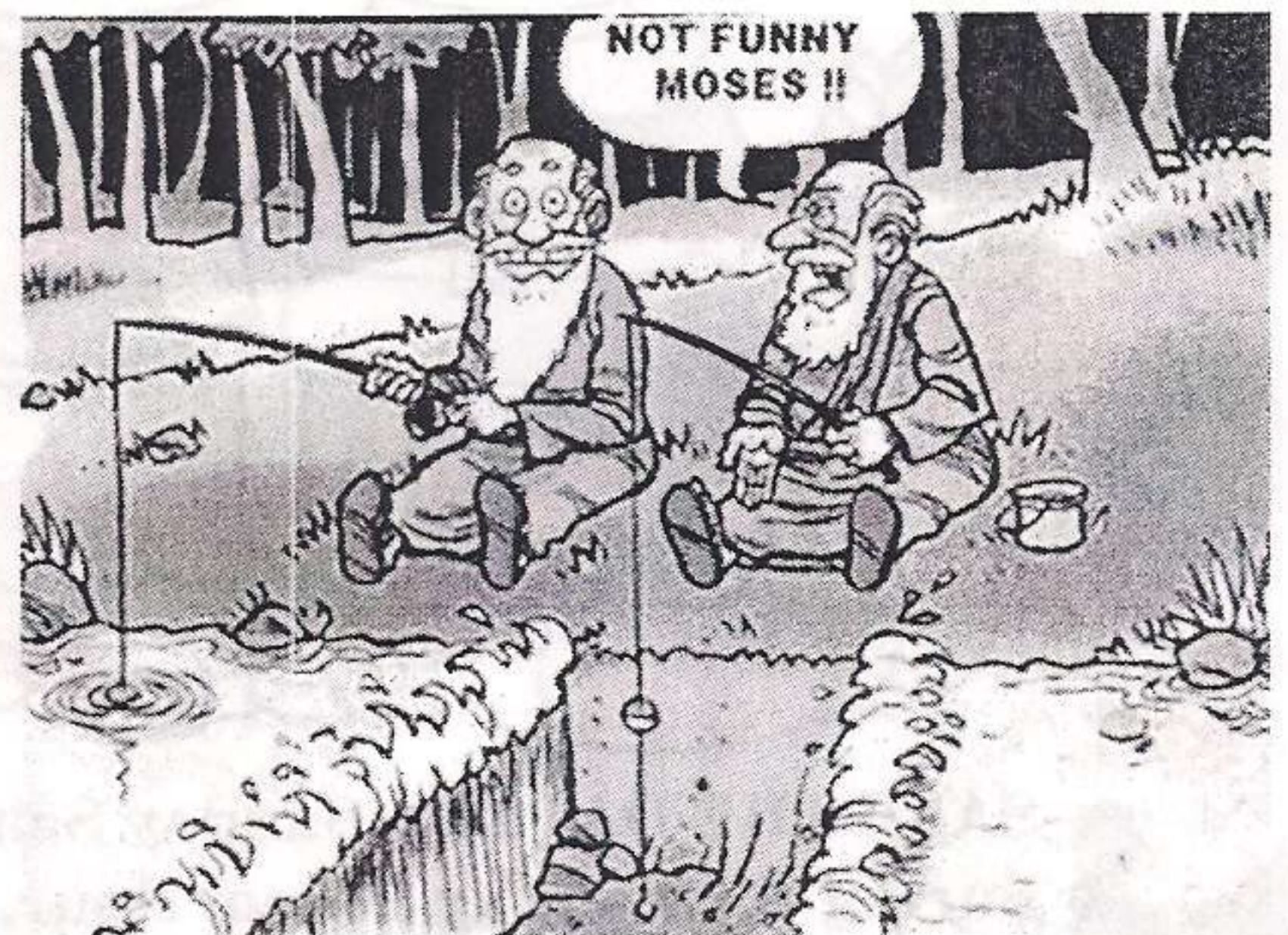
Old Business: Stallion Mechanical got both furnaces serviced.
Tom painted the hand railing and hall going to basement.

New Business: There was a suggestion to pay more than \$100.00 to our speakers motion was made to pay \$125.00 to the speaker doing sermon only and \$175.00 to the speaker doing the whole service.

Through Greg Ingram we made a \$1000.00 donation to the hurricane victims in North Carolina. Several people have asked about passing the offering plates again we will begin to do that the 1st Sunday in November. Thanks to Bob and Annette and Dean for their help setting up for the pet blessing. Lisa Triponey updated us on the findings of the survey for help and gave few suggestions on a few of the areas.

Next meeting is November 13, 2024
Meeting Adjourned

Submitted by : Karen Villella



We Care Pregnancy Center Collection

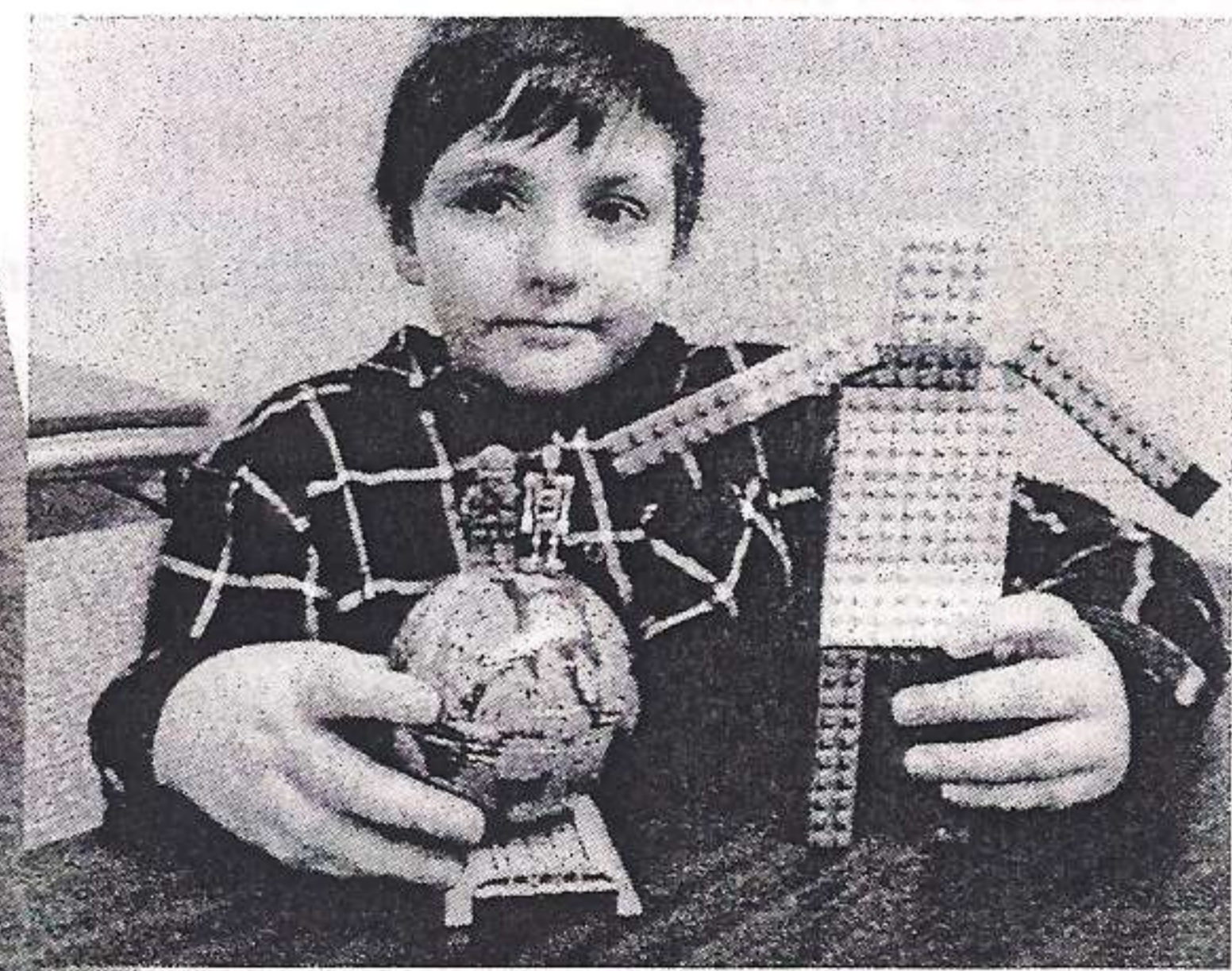
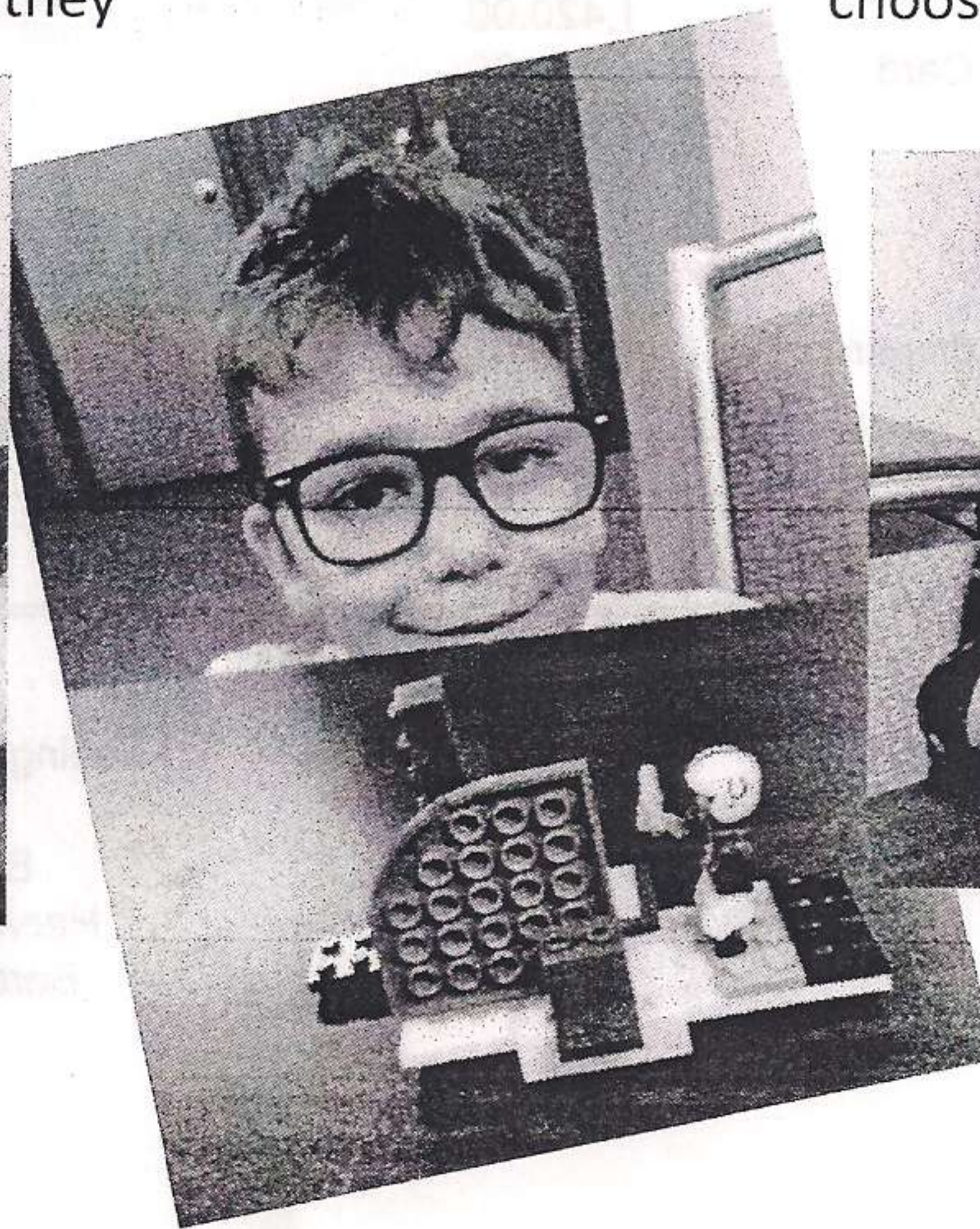
By Linda Blosch

Once again, the generosity of the Paradise Church has come through for our outreach to the We Care Pregnancy Program. Our cradle was overflowing with the following items: 19 baby hats, 20 afghans, 1 baby cape, 11 boy outfits, 5 girl outfits, 6 hat/mitten sets, 6 pairs of booties, 1 changing pad, 1 quilt, 1 sleep sack, 1 body suit pack, 6 sweaters, and 3 mitten sets. We also collected \$680 through our weekly envelopes. We are, indeed, blessed to have so many gifted knitters, crocheters, and sewers in our congregation. Thank you very much to all who contributed to this very worthwhile project.

Sunday School News

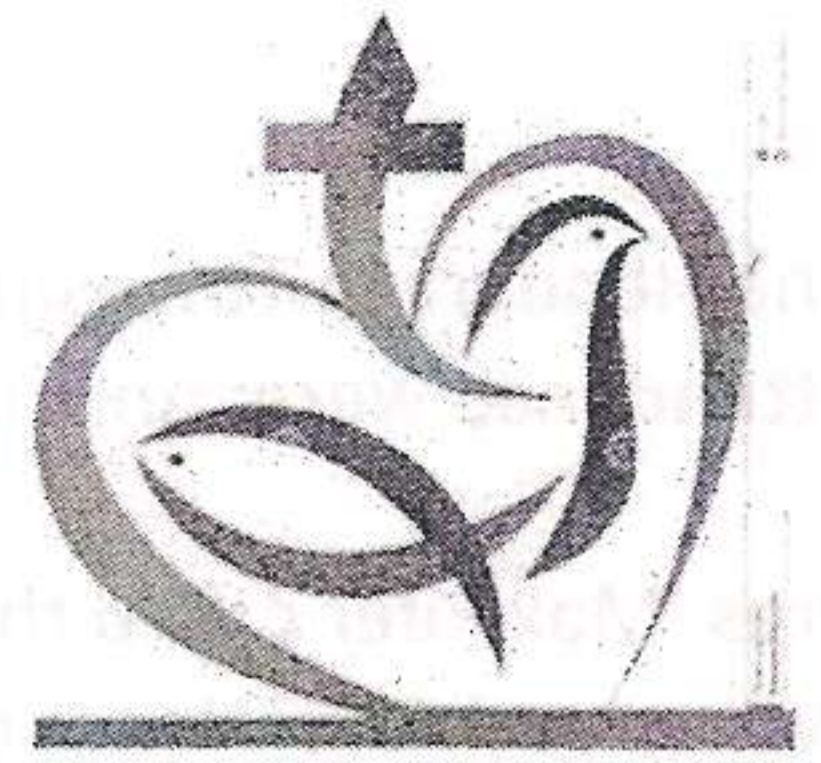
By Bobbi Becker

Over the past year the older primary Sunday School class has been doing lessons using Legos during Sunday School. These lessons focus on common Bible stories. The stories are read at the beginning of class and then the students build something from the story using Legos. These are a few pictures of previous builds. The class just started a new book focusing on the Parables of Jesus. It is awesome to see how engaged the boys are in the stories and very interesting to see what they choose out of the story to build.



Reformation of the Missions Committee by Lori Yohe

In conjunction with our church's current path to review, renew and re-energize, a Missions Committee has been formed and held it's first meeting on Monday, Oct 28. Attending were Marrissa Douthit, Cynthia Peace, Larry Shepler, Diedre Smith, Karen Villella, Brenda Weber and Lori Yohe.



We are very happy that Diedre has agreed to serve as our chairperson.

Discussion revolved around the purpose and focus of our committee. It was the consensus of the group that our emphasis and attention will center around providing and establishing mission projects and service opportunities for our church family that will be of benefit to those within our church and communities, both near and far. Ideas ranged from offering short-term counseling groups in areas such as grief or emotional help, to offering helping hands to elderly and caregivers, to re-visiting something similar to the GAIN food packing project Melissa Shepler had spearheaded several years ago.

It was agreed that over the next couple months, we would all pray, dream and brainstorm service ideas. We will reconvene in January to begin some definitive planning and head in some more concrete directions.

More members are encouraged and welcome to be a part of this group. If you have ideas or visions in this area we would love to hear them. Please watch for announcements to come.

The Cheerful Giver - 2 Corinthians 9

⁶The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency ⁴in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

⁹As it is written,

“He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹²For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

Schoolhouse News

Oct. 6, 2024

The Henderson Township Community Association met on Sunday, October 6, 2024 at 1:30. Those in attendance were: Ann, Lane, and Brenda Weber, Dave and Lori Yohe, and Max and Debbie Pifer.

Pres. Max Pifer called the meeting to order. Debbie read the minutes from the March 2024 meeting. Brenda Weber and Ann Weber made a motion to approve the minutes.

Lori Yohe gave the treasurer's report having \$7,890.72 in the checking with another \$255.00 that needs to be deposited. In April, we received \$633.05 from the Quilt Show and Soup to Go fundraiser. We received Gifts of Love for Patsy Love around \$700.00 plus an additional \$120.00 for Luther and David's memorials. On Aug. 26, 2024, Able Pest came to treat the area for termites by injecting a solution in the ground. This cost \$2,484.00 and has a one year warranty with a \$400.00 per year extension option. He advised us to wait till spring then remove the particle boards in the basement and the boards outside. Debbie Pifer and Dave Yohe moved to approve the treasurer's report.

A discussion was held on the parking lot. Max had a company from Clearfield come to give an estimate on a tar and chip parking area. The estimate was about \$6,500.00. We decided that the kitchen, restroom, and floor was our priority issues. We discussed blocking off the basement inside entrance and use only the outside or create an entrance in the rear of the restroom to allow room to expand the size of the bathroom. We will discuss these options with Tom Douthit. We will meet again on Oct. 14, 2024 at 7:00 to discuss floor options: Deb will research paint, Lori and Dave-Epoxy paint, Lane and Brenda-laminate wood flooring.

Improvements completed: Lane bushhogged the lower area and power washed the swing set, etc. Yohe's and Weber's put up a Monkey Bar Dome, Tire Swing and Tetherball. Gary Fillhart painted the foundation and steps a dark grey. Patrick Burkett removed a pine tree and trimmed a maple tree for \$200.

Tracy Weber will hold a community Trash & Treasure sale on Oct 11-12.

We are going to replace the 2 old electric heaters with new electric tower ceramic heaters.

Max and Lori moved that we give a donation of \$250 to the Paradise Community Cemetery Committee for lawn mowing.

Lori suggested that we create a fire pit on the lower side and Lane said that the pavilion will need work in the future.

Lane moved to adjourn the meeting with Dave seconding that motion. Meeting adjourned.
Next meeting tentatively set for April 7, 2025.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Pifer*

Oct 14 update:

We will start preparing the floor for painting on Nov. 12 at 6:00.

Love Thy Neighbor

By Tracy Weber

On Thursday, September 26th, 2024 Hurricane Helene slammed into Florida's Gulf Coast with winds over 140 MPH. No one knew at the time, but this massive storm would aim straight for the heart of the Appalachian Mountains; bringing with it an unprecedented amount of rain that would cause monumental flooding. When the spiraling arms of the hurricane stalled over these mountains, staggering amounts of rain fell; overwhelming creeks, streams, rivers, and lakes – forever changing the topography of the land. After the storm, a resident of Boone, N.C. told a local news station that the mountains “exploded” with water, and he could hear and feel the mountains groan under the pressure.

Homes, cars, people, and entire towns were swept away in the floodwaters and landslides that followed the deluge. One of the hardest hit areas was western North Carolina. The areas around Black Mountain, Swannanoa, Chimney Rock, and Spruce Pine were greatly impacted. Nearly two feet of rain fell on Mt. Mitchell – the highest point east of the Mississippi River.

Greg Ingram and MaryKay Satterlee are our friends and neighbors who make their home in Desire with their 6-month-old son, Archer. This is the story of how they were moved to donate items and bring them to hurricane victims in the aftermath of the storm.

We all saw the news and heartbreaking videos on social media documenting the destruction left in the wake of Hurricane Helene. Being a new mother herself, MaryKay's heart ached for the babies and mothers suffering after this storm. She felt the overwhelming need to donate her surplus supply of frozen breast milk, and searched until she found a donation site in Cornelius, N.C. This soon snowballed into the goal of filling Greg's truck with all the supplies it could hold, and driving everything straight to those who desperately needed these items.

MaryKay put out the call over Facebook for help. “These are our people, it's up to us to help them.” As owner of The Kind Groomer in Sykesville, she offered her salon as a drop-off point for donations. Soon there was a huge amount of donations filling the salon, with more on the way. Before the start of the church service that Sunday morning, I let the congregation know their plan to take donations, offering our garage along with Lane and Brenda's home as collection sites. Greg's plan was to leave on Tuesday, October 6th, so that did not leave much time. Our consistory met and decided to send money from Paradise with Greg to help the victims as well.

At our home on Monday morning, a steady stream of people began dropping off food, clothing, baby food, pet food, water, over the counter medicine, and much more. Joe Bussard purchased nearly \$600 of baby formula to send. Greg had gone to Goodwill and told them he was purchasing coats to take with him to North Carolina. A customer there purchased several coats and donated them to Greg, and an employee did the same. They too were moved to help.

As the donations rolled in at our home, Meghan, Jacob, and I sorted and labeled them to make packing and distribution easier. Greg gathered the supplies from all the donation sites, then Lane and Brenda helped him safely pack and secure everything into his truck. There was just enough room left for Greg in the driver's seat.

Love Thy Neighbor (continued)

Greg also packed a large pot of sloppy joe, with over 1000 hot dogs and condiments. He brought along his gas grill with a plan to set up and cook for anyone who needed it. When I asked Greg what made him decide to do all of this, he replied, "Watching the news and seeing entire communities literally wiped off the map, I felt that God called me to go. They are tight-knit people just like we are here, and I felt the need to help."

The number of items collected was far more than Greg's truck could hold, so they were sent with another group spearheaded by Marie Osman who set off for North Carolina with 2 enclosed trailers, and met up with Samaritan's Purse when they arrived in the hard-hit areas.

Greg left on his journey at 2am on Tuesday, October 8th with a loaded-down truck and the prayers of a whole community behind him, asking God to lead him to those who needed the supplies the most. Greg jokingly told me that as he was driving, the huge stack of bags in the passenger seat would shift and turn the radio station he was listening to.

Greg was able to drop off MaryKay's frozen breast milk and baby supplies. The mountain communities that were hardest hit are home to many mothers who choose to breast feed. Their freezers, frozen milk, and supplies were obliterated.

Greg then arrived in Statesville at a small church. They were overflowing with clothing and other supplies, so they simply were unable to take any of his donations. He was told once he went up into the mountains that there was no GPS and no cell service. Old school maps would have to be used to navigate. He was able to drop off 400 lbs. of pet food at an animal shelter there, and stayed for an hour to help load and unload supplies.

His next plan was to head toward Swannanoa and Ashville. As he was driving, he noticed a road sign for Lick Skillet Rd. and knew he was in the south. He travelled to the outskirts of Spruce Pine and found all the bridges washed out. Local traffic only could pass.

Greg then headed to Ashville. He saw everything covered in dirt, and he explained that it looked like a 300-yard-wide bulldozer had just had barreled through the town, leaving nothing standing. Greg travelled further along the Swannanoa River as far as he could, but every bit of infrastructure was destroyed. The toxic mud and dirt were absolutely everywhere.

Greg then found his way to the Black Mountain fire hall and police station where he was able to drop off everything but the clothing. There were canopies set up like a tailgate where people were cooking and making up hundreds of meals in Styrofoam containers. He left his grill and all the sloppy joe, hot dogs, and condiments with the volunteers there.

Outside of a Tractor Supply store in Black Mountain, he found a group of around 100 volunteers sorting and distributing clothing. There Greg was able to drop off all the clothing donations.

Although in his heart he wanted to stay longer, he was exhausted and wanted to get home to his family. He spent the night at a hotel in West Virginia and headed home the next day.

Greg told me that he never saw anyone crying, and no one was complaining. The people were joyful, and happy to have escaped with their lives. "What else can you do except trust in God and keep going?" The trip was an eye-opening experience and satisfying. Greg was amazed at the resilience of everyone.

Love Thy Neighbor (continued)

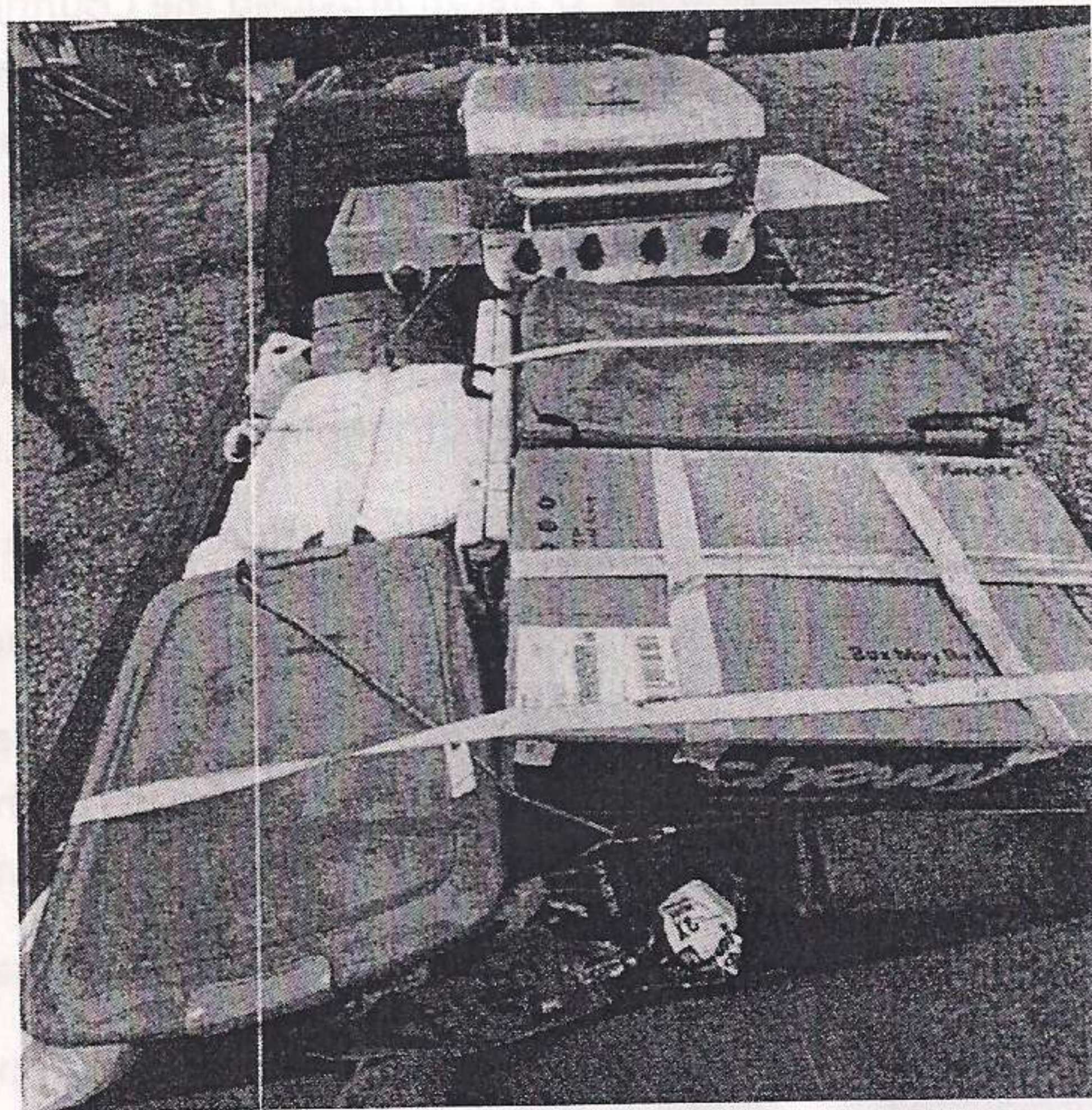
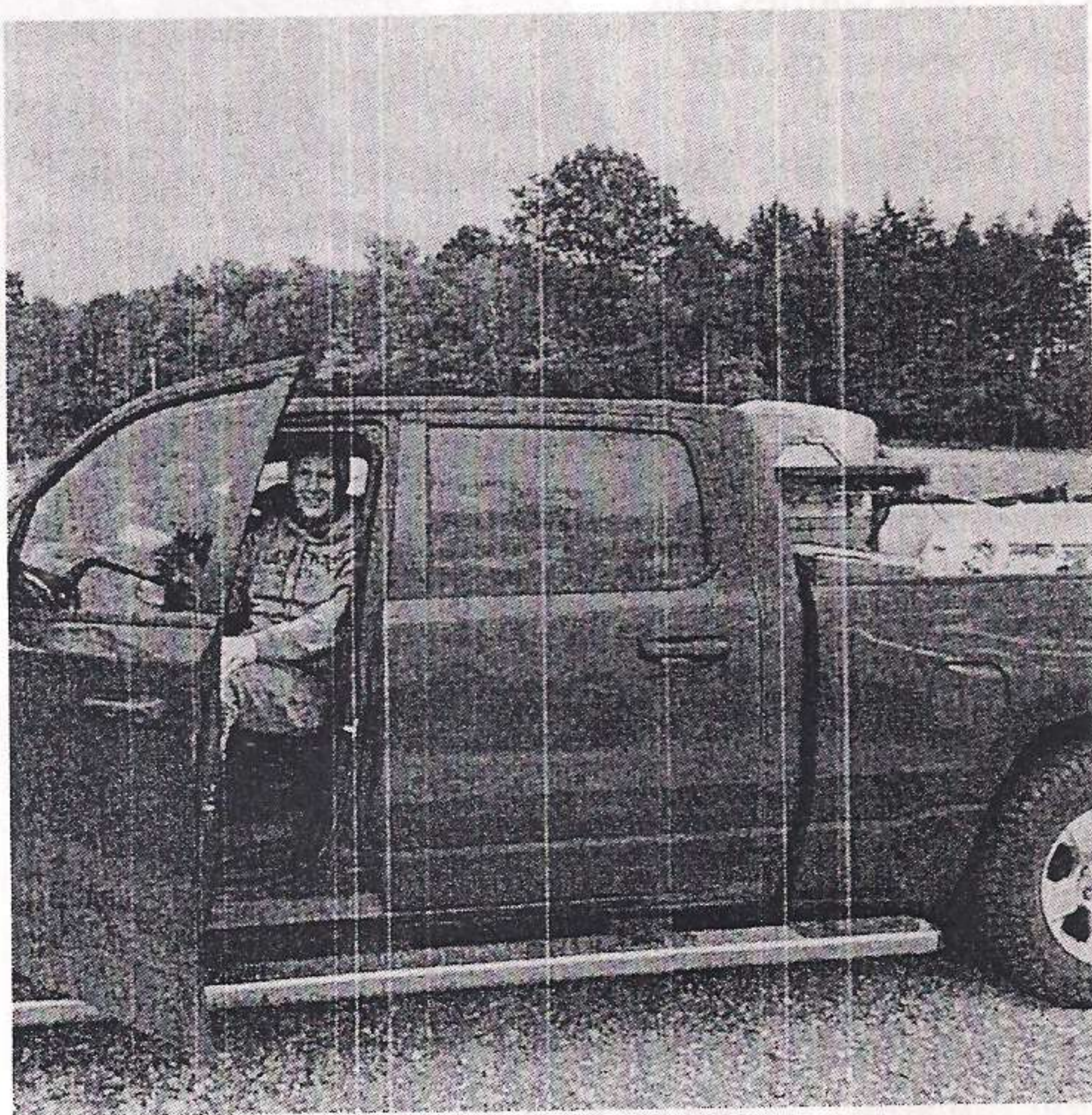
"I'm glad that the people from our communities were so generous," Greg said. "There's really not that much of a difference in people here and those in the hollers of North Carolina."

Matthew 22 tells us: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." "This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as yourself."

Greg is truly humble, and insists that what he did was nothing remarkable. Like Greg and MaryKay, ordinary people from across this great nation answered the plea of the hurricane victims, mobilizing essential supplies and donations, and heading into these devastated areas. This truly exemplifies the transformative power of human kindness.

As we head into winter, many people there are still without electricity and water; and it will be that way for months. Many have now moved into tents on their land where their homes once stood, or where their homes are now uninhabitable. I am telling this story to keep your hearts connected to these people who have survived the unimaginable, and lost so much. So many people lost their lives, and many more are still missing. The area has been blessed with love, supplies, and manpower; helping them sort through the debris in the hopes that they can someday rebuild. The recovery will take months, if not years.

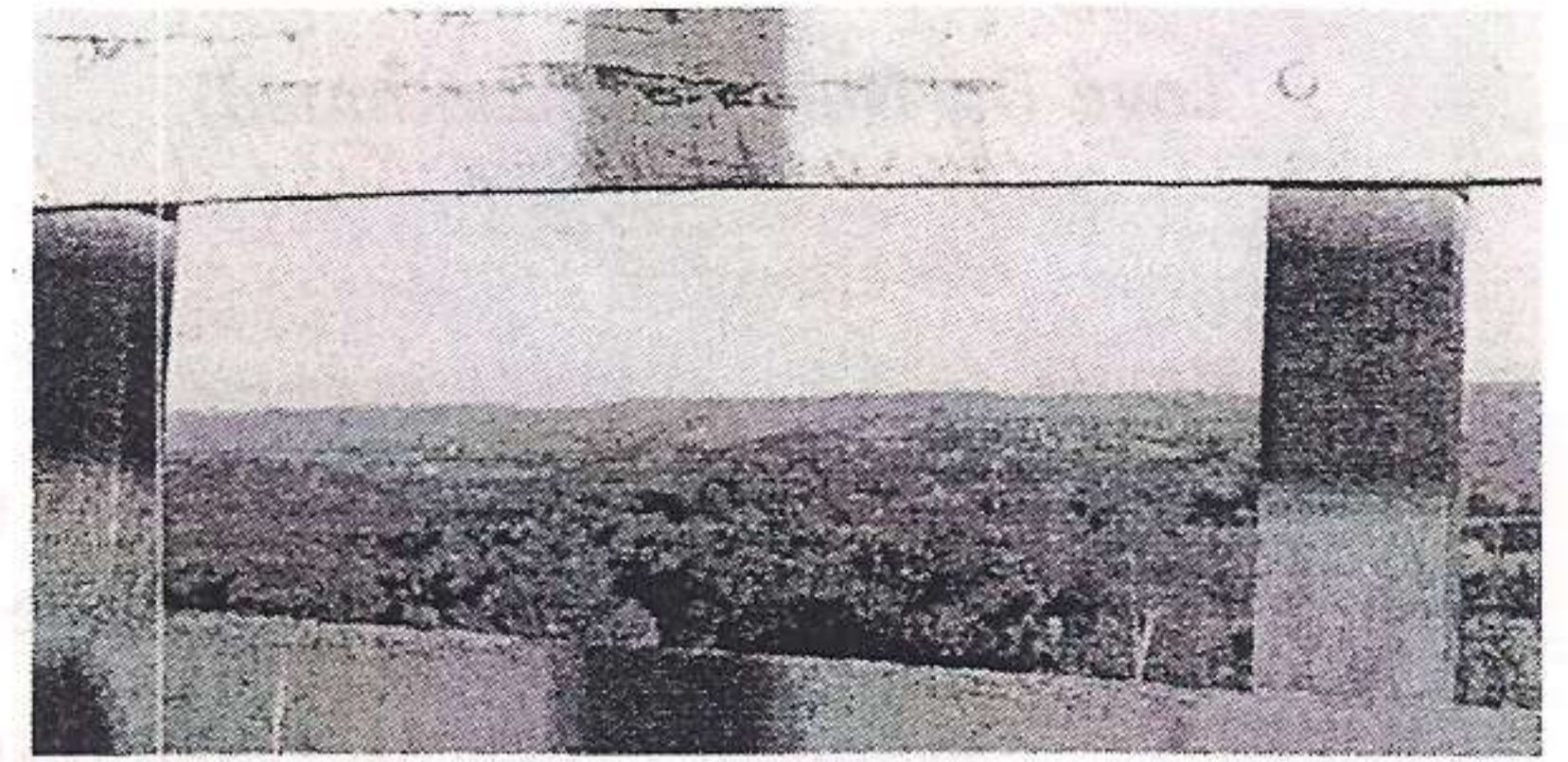
For over 50 years, Samaritan's Purse has effectively reached hurting people all around the world with food, medicine, and other assistance in the Name of Jesus Christ. If you are able to donate, I encourage you to visit Samaritan's Purse at www.samaritanspurse.org.



FALL FESTIVAL 2024

By Lori Yohe

What an absolutely gorgeous Autumn day God blessed to us on Sunday, Oct 20, for Fall Festival 2024. We could not have ordered better weather than what was provided.



Over 60 persons of all ages came out to enjoy what the day offered and there was much offered! In addition to the warm sunshine and glorious Fall colors (that we could soak up on one of the three hayrides Mark Pifer graciously provided throughout the afternoon), there were an abundance of activities happening.

Outside competitions included cornhole games, ring the pumpkin, Annette Roy's bigger than life Connect Four and Kerplunk games, the Gourd Tic-Tac-Toe plus a tub of shelled corn to play in. The younger guests had fun hopping from game to game while adult-like people stepped up to show their expertise at the cornhole boards.

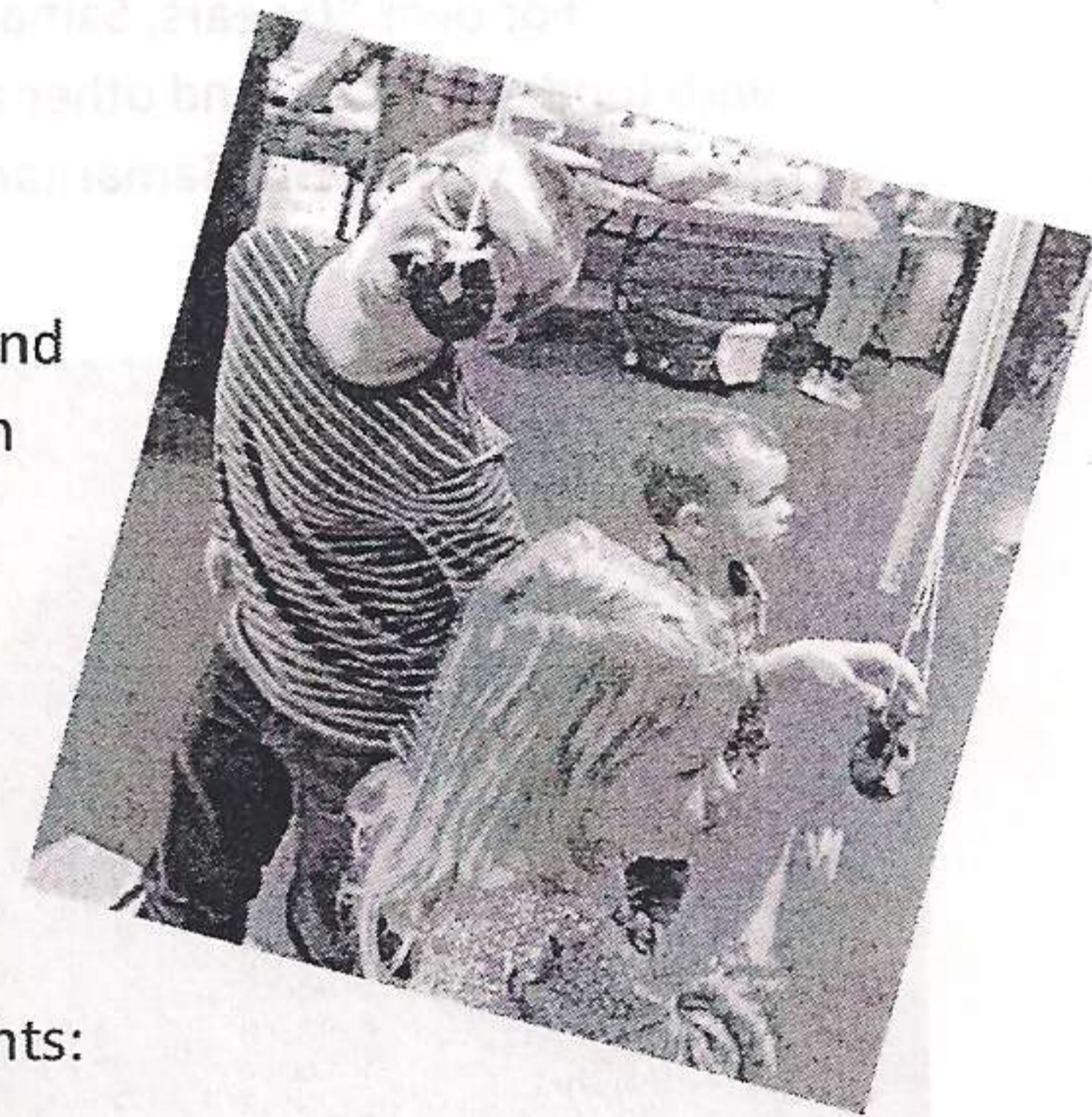
In the church basement, the fun continued. Morgan Shepler offered a beautiful Fall glass bottle decorating craft for anyone who wanted and Bobbi led a children's Fall craft along with a Lego building competition. Loretta Shepler set up a Carrom board game for some friendly competing. Lisa Triponey recruited more than willing participants in the ever-popular eating-donuts-on-a-string.



Top-Meg's Build: Bottom-Ty's Build



And of course, there was bedazzled pumpkin decorating led by Tracy and Meg Weber. Susie O'Harah provided the Counting Guessing Games and Meg brought a HUGE watermelon from her garden so we could try to guess its weight.



Michelle Pifer headed up the meal and kitchen crew and provided us with a great dinner with walking tacos and loads of Fall and Halloween themed fruit, veggies and cheese trays and desserts to top off the perfect day.



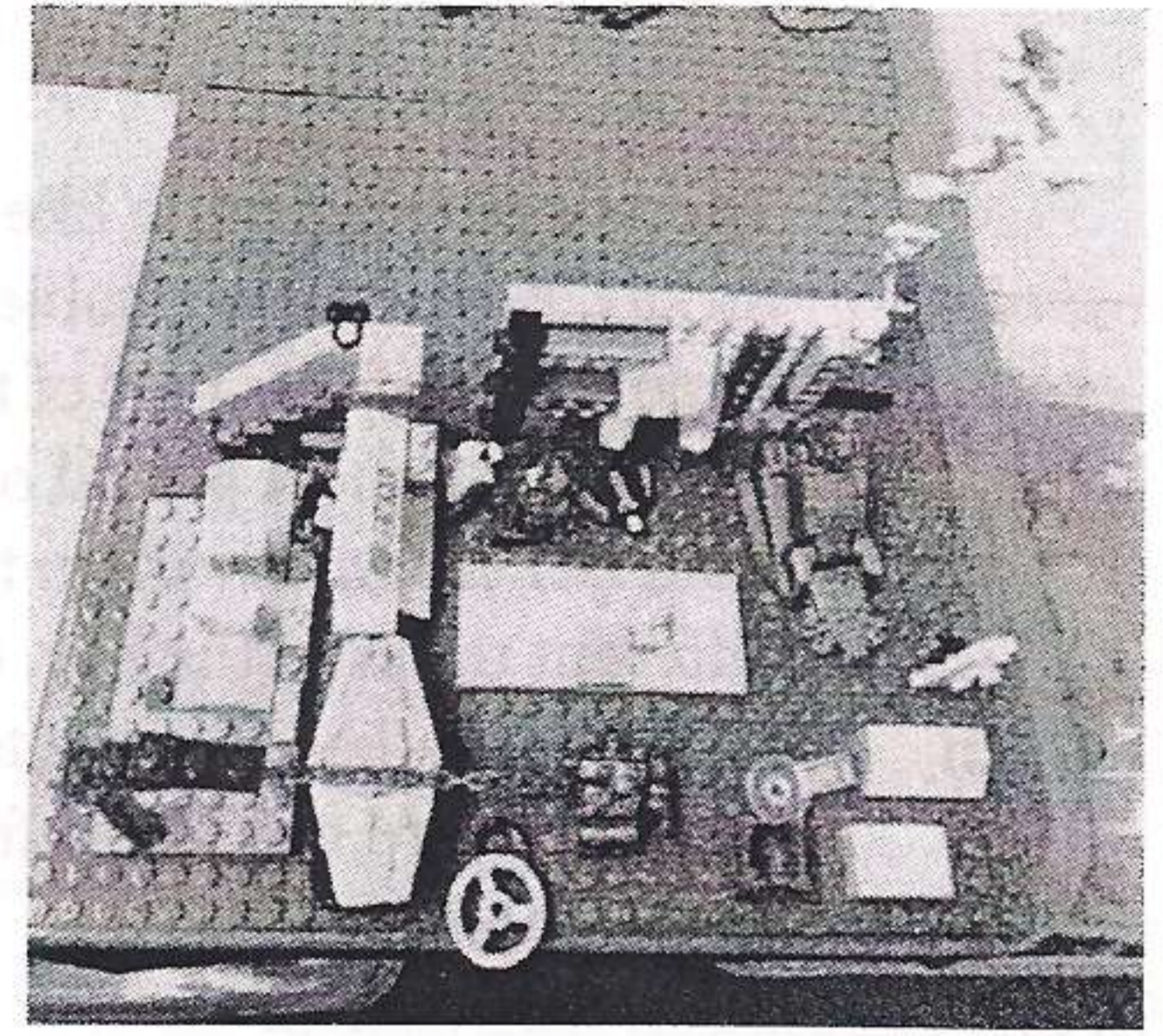
Here are some note-worthy highlights:

- Bob Roy reigned over the corn hole games.
- Karsyn Pifer had the best finesse in the Pumpkin Ring Toss as she used each of the six rings as a Hool-a-Hoop before gently placing the ring on the pumpkins. Beyond cute!!
- Guess How Many Winners:
 - Jackson Triponey won the Pretzel balls.
 - Karsyn Pifer won the guess on the Kit Kats & Gummies
 - Alex States was closest on the Mini M&M's

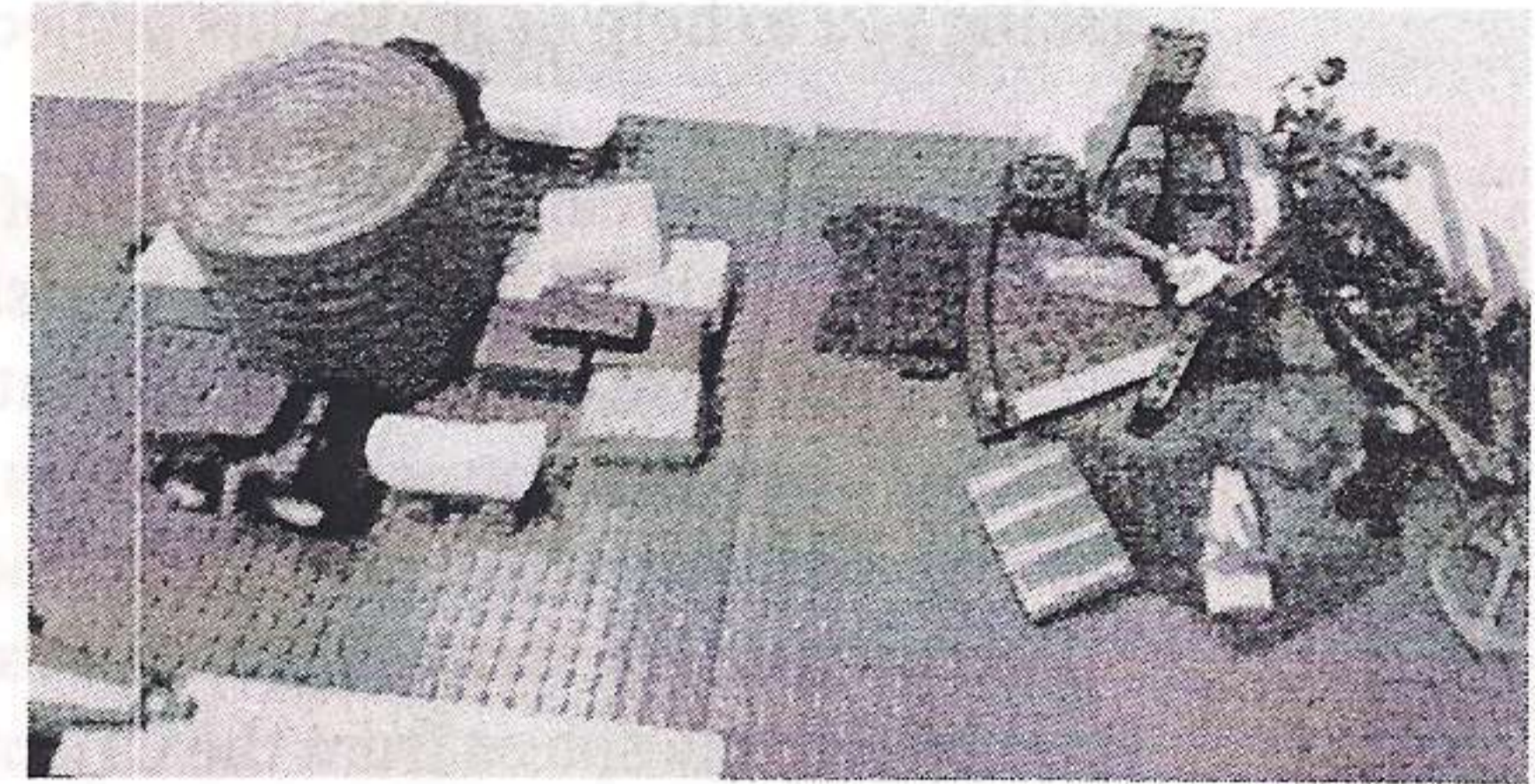
-Elaine Fillhart and Michelle Pifer tied in guessing the weight of the watermelon was weighted a whopping 41.5 lbs!!

-Mike Carlson judged the Lego Builds and awarded first place to Rhyett Polito in the under 7 bracket, Jake Weber in the 7 to 16 bracket and Meg Weber in the 16 and up bracket.

It was a fantastic afternoon! A heartfelt, huge THANK YOU to all who helped in any way, to those who donated food and prizes and candy and to those who attended. And give praise to an awesome God for blessing us with these precious times for celebrating life!

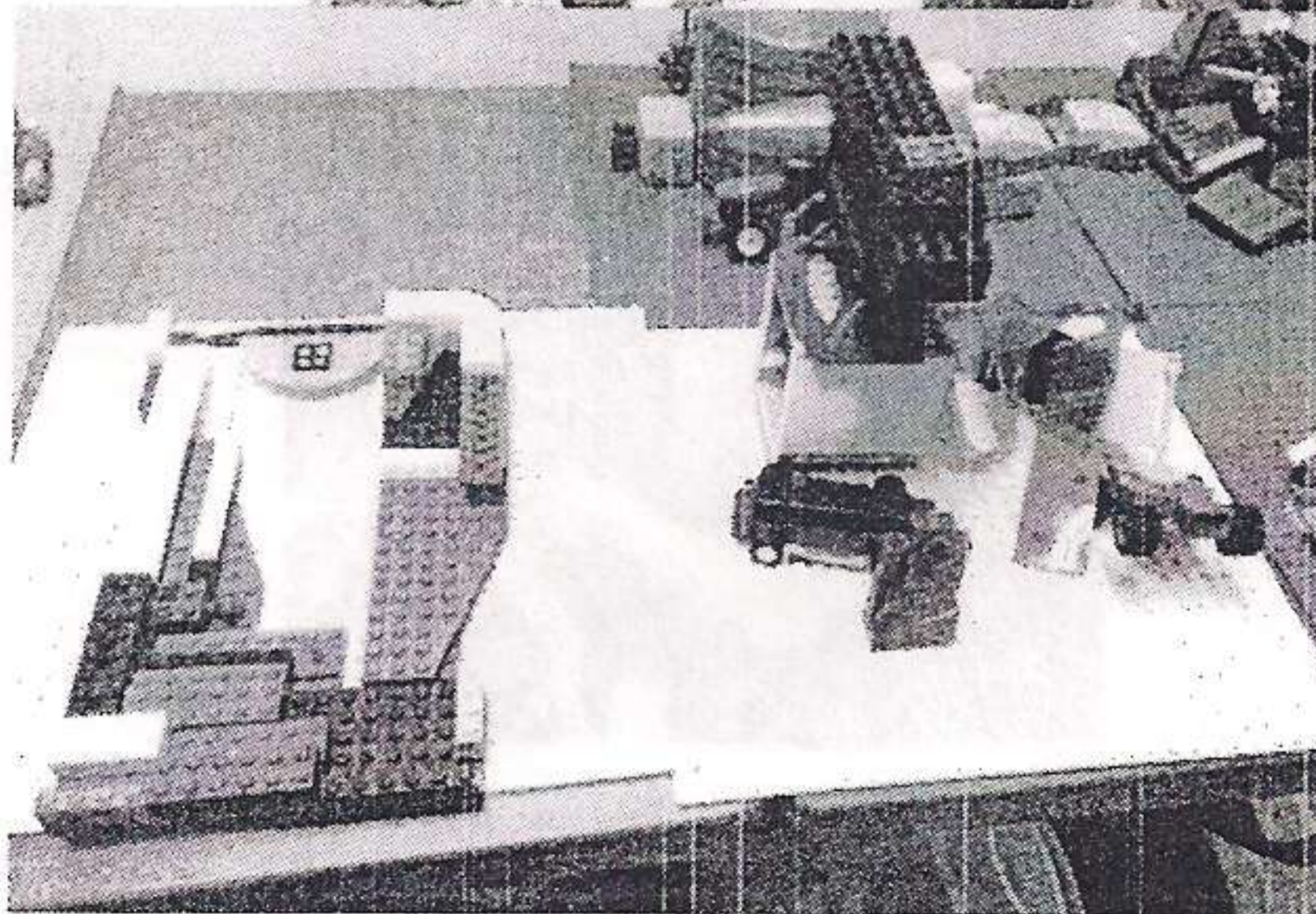


Jackson's Build



Jake's Build

Easton's Build



Olivia's Build

Rhyett's Build



Christmas Hope for Santa Maria

There is nothing quite like Christmas dinner with family. We all have our holiday favorites: ham, turkey, potatoes, vegetables, you name it. From family favorites, to family traditions, we all know the importance of this part of the holiday: to sit around the table, to eat together, and celebrate the season for a short period of time as a family. Dinners together in Guatemala are not always possible: from fathers who work in the fields from sunrise to sunset, to children who attend school ½ days at different times of the day, to mothers who set up their produce stands in the marketplace all day, it is hard for families to come together for a meal at any set time of the day. However, it's even harder for them to afford any of the foods that you might believe are an essential part of an everyday meal, let alone a holiday meal.

As we move into the holiday season, we are inviting all of you to partner with us with one of our biggest outreach efforts: to bring hope, comfort, and a hot meal to those who need it most. We are asking you to help us make this project a reality!

Over the past 3 years, with the help of our friends and partners across the country, we provided 2,000 hot meals for families for Christmas. We want to make this dream come true again! Each dinner consists of the most significant foods of the Latino culture: tamales, 2 loaves of pan (bread), ponche (warm fruit punch), as well as 2 cookies for dessert. These foods have deep roots in their culture, and have significant ties to their faith: from the gently wrapped tamales that symbolize both Mary carrying the Messiah, to her wrapping Jesus in the manger, to the hot spiced punch, symbolizing the spices from the Orient with the Wise Men, every item is a reminder of the gift of God to the world in His son, Jesus Christ. As important as those foods are to the culture, that fact remains: our families just cannot afford to buy them or even the ingredients to make them. So, that's where we come in: we plan to employ local women in our village to prepare take-out dinners for families.

The cost for one meal, which includes the cost of preparation along with "take-out" containers/ plasticware, is only \$5. Last year, because of your amazing love and support, we not only provided those hot meals, but we also were able to purchase hundreds of toys for children in need. Won't you help us make this dream possible again?

Count Me In! I want to partner with Moving Mountains to bring Christmas Hope to Santa Maria de Jesus!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

I would like to donate:

- \$5 for one meal
- \$20 for a family of 4 people
- \$10 to sponsor toys for all children in 1 family
- Other Amount _____
- Online donations can be made through Managed Missions:
<https://movingmountains.managedmissions.com/OurTrips>



A Message from the Kellers Moving Mountains 2024

“Thank you for ruining my life.” Those are not exactly the words you hope to hear from a mission team member. However, given the fact that I know and understand the sense of humor and heart of the person who walked up to me and said that, I understood his words completely. I smiled, and I asked him to sit and talk for a short time. He continued to explain the wave of emotions he was experiencing even months after returning home from serving the children and their families in Guatemala.

He said, “My life was so much easier before I went on this trip. I did my own thing. I went wherever I wanted, did whatever I wanted, and thought only about myself and the people around me. I would go out on my tractor and mow for hours without a thought in the world - just me and Mother Nature. But now. Everything has changed. I cannot get their faces and their stories out of my head.”

Like so many people who have served on a mission team, my friend Dan was experiencing just a snapshot of what life is like when we open our hearts and our eyes to the needs of the world. Everything changes. And although he and his wife have traveled extensively throughout their lives, none of their journeys took them to where I took them: into the heart of poverty, and into the lives of so many people who are desperate for reminders of hope and love. Dan continued to explain, “All my life I thought I had it all and did it all. I thought I’d seen everything there is to see in a life that was filled with so many trips to so many places. But I had no idea what the world was really like. I didn’t know that my heart was missing a piece until I found it there, in a little village on the side of a volcano. And I’m pretty sure I will never be the same guy I was before I got there.”

This past summer, we were blessed to have Dan and his wife as a part of a team of 29 volunteers who signed up to serve in Guatemala. Although this team size is slightly lower than our pre-pandemic team size, we felt honored and encouraged to begin building our team back to its full capacity. Sadly, three of our volunteers had to cancel their plans to travel due to some unexpected health issues very close to our departure date. That left us with some last-minute worries: a huge project list and 3 less people to help us accomplish everything we felt God was calling us to do. But, as He always does, God provides help and strength when we need it most.

Each year, our project list is dependent upon two factors: the volunteers to work, and the funds to purchase the materials. Obviously, the more helping hands we have, the more we can accomplish. What is a little tricky for us is the timeline in which people sign up to come, as compared to the timeline when I need to pay for deposits on materials. In other words, I have to determine project numbers long before I am assured that I will have the people and money to cover them. It’s been an on-going lesson in faith, patience, and trusting in the Lord to guide our decisions. But time and time again, I am reminded that God’s plans for our lives, and for our work, are so much better than our own.

This past July, despite being a smaller team than we anticipated, we were able to accomplish an incredible amount of work, thanks to many helping hands in the village. Our project numbers were: 30 sets of bunk beds built, 30 water tanks installed, 3 concrete floors, 104 roof replacements, 100+ children for VBS daily, 202 families for grocery distribution, and 425 children through our donation center. Praise God for His help and provision to enable us to accomplish these goals!

As much as I love seeing the joy on the faces of the families who receive these much-needed improvements to their homes and families, I have come to treasure the moments that our team members experience with the children and their families even more so. This summer, one of our new team members got a chance to meet the child that their family had helped to sponsor for many years. Through the years, they had exchanged countless letters and photos, as well as small gifts traded back and forth with each trip I made to the village. Their sponsored child, now a young man who has since graduated out of the program, is working to try to support his parents’ medical needs. I was so excited for them to have the opportunity to meet for the very first

Moving Mountains (continued)

time. My words will never, ever describe the moment when they saw each other face to face. Looking back now, I wish I would have recorded that event; however, I wanted to preserve their privacy and allow them to process their emotions without worrying about what things might look like on a video. It was one of the most beautiful expressions of love and gratitude I have ever been witness to. There was not a dry eye in the crowd. Their initial hug must have lasted several minutes, and they both held onto each other, soaking up the years and years sending notes and letters back and forth, and not really understanding the impact their decision to sponsor played on this young man's life for so many years. The photos taken of them all show the same emotion: "I have loved you since the beginning." That week was so impactful for them, and for their new-found Guatemalan family. They made time to visit with one another, and learn more about each other's lives. It was truly a beautiful reminder of the power we all have to impact another's story, simply by saying, "I believe in you and in your hopes and dreams. I want to walk beside you as you work for those goals."

It is also humbling to see first-hand how God works so clearly to use us in such ways that bless others. It serves as a reminder to us as to how He will guide our steps as long as we are willing to move our feet. Although it may sound cliché, I no longer believe in coincidences – only God-incidents. Time and time again, He never ceases to amaze me in the tiny minute details of our lives, and how chance meetings are rarely due to chance, and that missed opportunities are simply new opportunities for something that we may have overlooked on our journey through life.

Every summer, I see evidence of these God-incidents in the timing of our home visitations, the families we are scheduled to see, and even the last minute changes to our daily plans. This past summer was filled - absolutely filled - with God-incidents. One, however, had such a profound impact on every single person on our team, and I want to share that with all of you. I feel certain that my words will not do this story justice. But please take a few moments to really reflect on the beautiful example of God's handiwork.

On the last day in the village, I gathered a few of my dear friends from church, and invited them to visit some homes of the elderly and infirmed. Although these home visits can be difficult on the heart, it is here, in the deepest pains and struggles behind closed doors, where we can meet with a family face to face to offer hope and encouragement through our words and prayers. It is here, amidst the pain and suffering, where God often opens our eyes to the true needs of the world. We had a few hours before our good-bye celebrations, so we asked the women of the Directiva to take us to a few homes of those in need of prayer. As always, the list was long.

Because we had quite a distance to walk, we decided to visit 3 different homes that morning. When we got to the second house, the family asked us to come back later, as they were not comfortable with having visitors at that time. We continued on our way, and went to another home. The women asked us if we still wanted to go to another house, and I said yes, as we had only been able to see two other families thus far. So, we hiked across town and went into the home of a woman who was very sick. She was so young - probably in her early 30s. She was in bed, and unable to sit up or speak to us. Her sister was caring for her. Her sister told us that she was unable to eat solid foods and now only able to drink powdered milk. She also told us that the milk was so expensive, and they could not afford that, as well as the food they needed for her young children. Every one of us fought back our tears as we learned more about their daily struggles. We all dug into our pockets and gave the sister all of the extra money we had to help buy the milk and food they so desperately needed. We prayed so hard - for healing, comfort, and strength. We prayed for the woman, for her young children, and for her loving sister who was staying day and night to try to care for the family in the best way she could. As we walked to the door to leave, the sister pulled us aside to speak privately. She told us that her sister was dying of pancreatic cancer and only had a few days left on this earth. They did not tell her that she was dying, and only her husband knew the severity of the situation. We stopped again to pray specifically for this amazing caregiver, who would soon bear the responsibility of helping to raise the children without their mom. We thanked her for the love that she was demonstrating through her tender care. We prayed for her strength and peace as well.

Moving Mountains (continued)

We left the house in silence. My heart was crushed for so many reasons - for the obvious suffering of the family, but also for the impact that this exchange may have had on my dear friend in our group. Few people knew that she, too, had lost a sister to pancreatic cancer a few years ago. She helped to care for her sister in the end days of her life. And although her sister had the supportive care of hospice services to help them all - she alone understood the grief that this woman would carry for years. When I could gather my words and catch my breath for a few minutes, I hugged my friend as tightly as I could. All I kept saying was, "I'm so sorry. I didn't know. I didn't know her sister was dying of cancer. I would never have brought you here to see this."

My sweet friend dried my tears and said, "The Lord brought me to this house. I needed to be here. I needed to share in their grief because I understand their grief in a different way than other people do. Leslie would want me to be here, especially to thank her sister for the love and care that she is giving. I was supposed to be here to see a little of what you see, and to feel a little of what you feel. This was God's plan today."

This is just one instance of how God worked in our team and in our schedule throughout the week to bring us to homes and places we might never have been without His guidance. Time and time again I am reminded that God's plan for our lives is so much better than our own, and if we just trust in His direction, He will allow us to see His work in incredible ways.

As you might expect, plans are already underway for the return to Guatemala in July of 2025. We know that God is working on the hearts of those He is calling to come and serve, and we trust him fully in our plans for our continued service to Him and to His beautiful children. We are also launching our annual Christmas outreach in the village, as we prepare to serve 2,000 hot Christmas meals to the families who are most in need. We will also work hard to raise funds to ensure that hundreds of children get a new toy for the holiday. If you would like to help us with that project, we would love to give you more information!

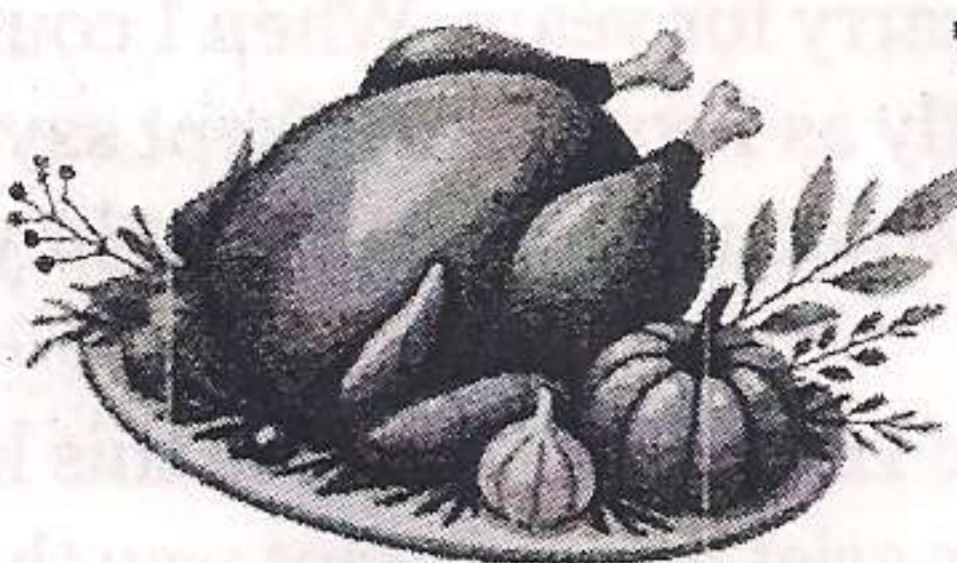
In closing, I have replayed my conversation with my mission team member over and over again. "Thank you for ruining my life." I think back to the countless tears I have shed and hours of sleep I have lost because of the poverty I have seen firsthand. I think back to the days when I could walk into a grocery store and not become overwhelmed with the abundance of waste and options available to everyone in my community. I remember times when weather predictions of hurricanes over Central America never even caught my attention. I can hardly remember a time when a sweet child's voice saying, "Te quiero mucho" didn't melt my heart. My suitcases often stay in the living room for months, and my passport lay waiting on my piano, at the ready in case I need, or want, to get on the next flight out of the country. There is not a day that goes by that I do not think about the countless memories that I have from my time on the mountain. So, thank you, God, for "ruining" my life, too. I wouldn't want it any other way.

In His service,
Rod & Lisa Keller
Moving Mountains Mission

The Thanksgiving feast is almost ready, but the ingredients and traditions are scattered all over the place! Can you help gather everything by searching for the hidden words? They might be hiding in any direction, so circle them when you find them and cross them off the list to bring the holiday together!

Thanksgiving Day

Word Search



- APPLE
- AUTUMN
- BLESSINGS
- BOUNTY
- BREAD
- CARVING
- CASSEROLE
- CELEBRATION
- CORN
- CRANBERRY
- FAMILY
- FEAST
- FRIENDS
- GATHERING
- GRATITUDE
- GRAVY
- LEFTOVERS
- MASHED POTATOES
- NUTS
- PIE
- PUMPKIN

Z	J	F	Z	B	W	E	D	U	T	I	T	A	R	G	F	R	V
N	G	W	H	P	M	Z	T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N	O	W
L	N	F	R	N	Y	Y	R	F	A	M	I	L	Y	K	P	A	H
R	I	R	Z	T	G	N	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	S	S	Z
L	F	I	Z	X	N	R	R	N	K	Y	F	V	N	T	R	T	M
C	F	E	F	P	X	O	X	T	D	Y	F	W	P	T	N	I	J
C	U	N	B	E	U	C	I	L	U	K	V	N	N	G	Y	N	T
B	T	D	K	O	A	M	M	T	G	R	Y	A	N	R	M	G	S
R	S	S	Z	R	U	S	P	A	A	T	K	M	R	L	D	I	R
E	Y	K	V	K	T	N	T	K	M	R	U	E	L	G	D	H	E
A	T	I	G	V	E	H	T	K	I	T	B	Q	Y	E	M	R	V
D	N	T	X	L	E	L	S	Y	U	N	Y	E	S	P	I	E	O
G	N	C	B	R	L	W	N	A	A	T	M	V	L	V	K	R	T
M	V	A	I	K	P	Y	M	R	U	T	N	Y	H	E	S	R	F
L	T	N	N	B	P	A	C	Y	L	Q	G	W	W	T	C	K	E
B	G	K	T	D	A	M	G	Y	B	R	S	W	U	H	N	T	L
E	L	O	R	E	S	S	A	C	T	H	A	N	K	F	U	L	M
P	S	E	O	T	A	T	O	P	D	E	H	S	A	M	R	T	P

- ROASTING
- SIDES
- SQUASH
- STUFFING
- TABLE
- THANKFUL
- TRADITION
- TURKEY
- YAMS

