

Global Impact Celebration

February 4, 2024

Pastor Aaron Johnson:

I want to welcome you to our annual Global Impact Celebration! This Sunday we have set aside time to celebrate what God is doing through our global and local missions and ministry efforts. And it is a privilege, as the Associate Pastor, to be able to introduce to you Debbie Dickman, our Local Missions leader, and Barb Lanning, our International Missions leader. You guys do a great job!

Barbara Lanning:

I'm Barbara Lanning, leader of International Missions, and on the Church Council to represent missions. What is GIC? Global Impact Celebration. What are we celebrating? And why now? Well, about 15 years ago, Mission Society, which is a part of the Methodist Church concerned with outreach, worked with our congregation for about a year. We wanted to better fulfill Acts 1:8, taking the news of Jesus locally and around the world. Now, the flags you see here represent some of the 200 countries that exist in the world. And the ones over the altar are some of where we have missionaries: Sweden, Kenya, India, Mexico, Thailand. Now, our congregation increased the number of missionaries we support from about two, to now about nine, and we would bring them back, about three a year, to interact with our local missions. People in our congregation would house them and we had meals together with them. We went to the Copper Canyon in Mexico. We sent mission teams down there to help make bathrooms and rooms so that the kids could have a teacher to come. And also, we gave food so that they would not starve. Some of you, and I, have been on mission trips, like to Kenya to help build seven churches, or to work at the Kenya Methodist University. Some of you have even taught there. Well, as you know, this past October we had a Salmon Dinner, and you were very generous. That was a mission event that gives for one specific thing, like our church youth group, or Martha's Cupboard, or a well in India or Kenya. We have been sending scholarship money this past year. We got this email just a couple days ago from the principal of the school in Kenya where we have had children be supported. Principal Marete Moses said, "Our results from the national test just came out and we have done well. We managed to take 15 students to the university to pursue degrees, 64 candidates managed higher diploma courses, and 57 will have certificate programs. Thank you, Central Church, for your support. On behalf of our school, I sincerely appreciate your church for the help you have provided to our students. Be blessed!" And that was signed, Marete Moses. Well, that's a one-time thing, but we needed to have a way to fund our missionaries all year round. And that is what COM is: Central Outreach Ministries. It's right there on the envelope that is in the pew. And when you give to this, it is divided fifty-fifty to local and international. You can also donate to individual missions, but if it comes to COM, we divide it equally.

This morning we've handed you a couple of information sheets, and this is the information sheet that tells you about our current nine missionaries.

International Mission Partners

- Marilyn Brenchley
- Alexandre Merzylakov
- Jeremy and Joy Ellington
- Jan Griffith

- Chris and Dora Barbee
- Dwight and Sarah Hires
- Tarahumara Ministries (Tomas Bencomo)
- Wycliffe (Gabe and Naomi Lawrence)
- Maua Hospital, Kenya

These are our covenant partners. Each of them receives about \$4,500 a year. And you might wonder: What does that fund? Well, sometimes it funds a pastor. It also might fund missionary outreach to children, so they learn about Jesus. And each month, the international team meets, and we talk about these; we get emails; we pray for them. We make decisions about how to help them. You're welcome to be a part of that team if you'd like to come. We meet the first Tuesday of each month in the library. And you can also sign up out in the Narthex to receive emails from these people.

So, why now? Well, we've found that there's kind of a lull between Christmas and Easter, and bad weather and all that. And it turns out that if we can celebrate at this time of the year, it really lifts our spirits. And so that is why we are having GIC at this time of the year. This is where we make a Faith Promise. Now, you received a card. And this Faith Promise means that, as God blesses us, we will give a regular amount or maybe even a special amount to Central's missions. And the card has a place for your questions and comments. You can put it in the offering as you come forward for communion or turn it in later at the Welcome Center. If you happen to be watching online, you can donate at the website or mail it in.

In the time since we started Global Impact Celebration, you, as a church, have given over one and a half million dollars locally and internationally. So we are trying, today and often, to explain to you how the funds you give are used and how we watch that very carefully. But this is your chance to give us some feedback. Maybe your life group is in touch with one of our missions. Maybe there's something you'd like us to do differently. It's your chance to give us some information. There's also a screen in the Narthex with photos and captions. You might have seen some of it before today's service. But thanks to Marilyn Allen, we have an amazing collection of pictures of things that our missionaries are doing.

Dwight and Sarah Hires are an example of a retired couple. They were from Oregon, and they are now in Mexico. They have set up a place to teach pastors, and they have helped start new churches in the Baja region of Mexico. They wanted me to give you a special message. They said, "Dear Central Church, we are so thankful for your faithful support over the years. Your prayers and gifts have supported the work of training young men and women for church planting in the rural areas of our states of Baja and Oaxaca in Mexico. Since 2006, nine new churches are fully functioning." Just think, nine new churches! "Thanks also for support for the handicapped children. It's been a joy to witness children walking, running, speaking, and playing for the first time. More recently, there is Ortiz Church, which is right in the middle of an agricultural community. These pictures show progress from beginning to now. How we praise the Lord for your part!" And that's just one message from Dwight and Sarah.

We often get messages from the Ellingtons, too. We began supporting the Ellingtons back when they met. They were having a service in their house. But in the time since then, we have helped them build a Praise and Worship Center. We've continued to give them money for gifts and food for many different people. They have started soccer

teams. They teach after-school programs. And now they are starting a new church in a village nearby.

We also support Alexandre. I can't tell you exactly where he is, but he's in Eastern Europe. An online ministry is growing and it's very impactful. We help pay his pastor's salary, and they in turn are helping three other churches. The online church goes from Siberia to Seattle! Alexandre wants me to tell you, "Thank you very much for your prayers and support. It is not easy to write about the regular life of an internet church (no pictures of groups), but the church lives and God is at work. Our grandmothers invite neighborhood children, and pray for their success in school, and donate things like shoes to neighborhood kids. One man, who has multiple sclerosis, watches and shares his testimony online. Please pray for peace as we help refugees. And please pray for God's wisdom for me and our church leaders in ministry to people with extremely different positions and views."

The Barbee family has been in Thailand ten years. The Lawrence family, from Kennewick, is now going to Papua, Indonesia. You can read about them and see more photos in the Narthex.

Finally, Proverbs 25:25 says, "Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land." Our words to them, and certainly their words to us, give us lots of reasons to praise the Lord! Our team will be out at a table for you to stop by after the service. We say, "Thank you, and please join us in spreading the gospel locally and to the 'uttermost parts of the world.'"

Debbie Dickman:

Well, I guess I don't need to introduce myself! You know, Barb gave us some of the history of GIC and how we got to where we are now, but there are some things about the Global Impact Celebration that I think are really important. We do three mission events a year. We have this event; we have Mission Sunday in August; and we have the fundraising Salmon Dinner in October. But what we hope you take away from this particular event are some really important things. We want you to be inspired by what you have seen people do. We want you to be inspired and give us feedback on how to enlarge our ideas about missions. How can we expand our vision? Where should we go? What should we do? Do you know local ministries who would bless our church and who we could bless? We want you to be informed. We want you to learn what is going on. We want you to help us think strategically about where we should go. And we really want to give you the kind of information about our mission partners and our local ministries that will help create a heart and strengthen a heart, in this church, for missions. And finally, we want to use this time to bless our ministry partners, our missionaries, and everybody in this church who does a single thing to support them, whether it's financial support, whether it's prayer, whether it's volunteering. When I came to this job in June, the first thing the team, who meets to talk about local missions, said was, "Well, why do we do missions? Why do we do ministries? What does that have to do with the mission of Central Church?" So, Matthew 28:19 says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." And if you look on our website, if you listen to anyone in this church, hopefully they know our mission is to make disciples, to meet people where they are, to love on them, and to find a way to bring them to Christ. You see what we have in the world today. Our local community is increasing in diversity. And if you look in our church, we have a church of a certain age. We have new people coming in, praise

them! But we have a history of a certain community who has been part of our church. We've lost some of our diversity. We are looking to bring it back. But our ministry outreach in the community, our education programs that bring people in, all help us know our neighbors better. And when we know our neighbors better and we know our community better, we can better meet them where they are and share the Lord with them. And that is a very important thing for us at this particular time, as we go forward. So, you might have picked up this brochure when you came in. We had volunteers who were standing out there who were handing you brochures. This little flyer covers the local ministries that we team with to spread Christ's news in the community. There's really one important thing in here. Yes, it lists what everybody does. It tells what the goal of that particular ministry is. But the part that's in bold is the part that says what the volunteer opportunities are. And if you take the time to read this, I'd do two things. I challenge you to find the typos. And if you tell me the typo, I know which one you're interested in. So, I will find you! At the back of the brochure, of course, is the name of our church, but on the inside back cover is my name and a way to contact me if the Holy Spirit calls you to serve in any way.

Local Mission Partners

- Child Evangelism Fellowship
- Fields of Grace
- Tri-Cities Food Banks
- Grace Clinic
- Martha's Cupboard
- Sent to Serve
- Teen Challenge (Men, Women, and Women's Jail)
- Tri-City Union Gospel Mission
- World Relief Tri-Cities
- You Medical

We have two people who will say much more important things than I have to say. This morning, we have two of our ministries. Team Challenge is represented here, and Frank Gomez is going to speak to you about the latest things that are happening there. And also, Carole Allenbaugh is representing Sent to Serve, and of course both of them have some real exciting news, part of which you saw outside. If you wondered what it was, no, it's not a new camp trailer for Pastor John. He asked, but then he looked in there and saw no beds, only showers, and he said, "Well, maybe not. I don't shower when I camp!" After the service, our tables will have representatives from some of our ministries there, and we ask you to take the time to walk by and say hello. Look again at that brochure and see if the Holy Spirit is calling you to serve in any way. On behalf of the local ministries, I would like to thank this congregation for your continued financial support, for your service, and for those of you who simply and most importantly pray for us, because we need those prayers to cover all of us as we go forward and do what we do to serve God in this community. So, I'm going to turn the microphone over to Frank, who's going to introduce himself. And then after that will be Carole Allenbaugh.

Frank Gomez:

Thank you, thank you, thank you so much! Thank you, Barb. Thank you, Debbie, so much for the invitation, for your prayers, and for your support. Good morning, Church. Thank you, thank you! From the bottom of my heart, first of all, I'd like to say thank you on behalf of our organization, on behalf of our leaders, and on behalf of our students and their families. We're so grateful for your continued support. I think we've been

partners, brothers and sisters, since probably 15 to 16 years ago. And so, man, the impact has been huge! And so, my name is Frank Gomez. I get a little nervous when the lights are in my face because I can't see you. But this is my first time here, speaking at your congregation, but I didn't come alone. I just want to let you know about myself. First, I'm the Center Director for the Tri-Cities men's campus, and my name is Frank Gomez. But like I said, I didn't come alone. I came here with some of our amazing, amazing students. And I'm going to ask our students, would you guys please stand up? So, these are some awesome men that are, you know, definitely walking the walk. They have decided to follow Jesus, to trust Jesus, to have faith, to find transformation, and to find freedom from addiction.

So, I went through the program myself. I've been with Teen Challenge about 15 to 16 years, and I've also been set free. I've been redeemed from addictions. And how many of you know that "he who the Lord sets free is free indeed"? Amen. So, I've been completely set free from my addictions, and now God's using me in a way where I can inspire others and give others hope. I went through the program back in 2009, started here in Tri-Cities. I am originally here from Tri-Cities. And back then it was only an induction program. But I went through the program, started in our Tri-Cities men's campus there in Pasco, and then I went to Spokane. I completed my program in Spokane Men's Teen Challenge. And when I completed the program, I decided to continue to follow Jesus. You know, I was like, this is the path that God put me in. He opened His door for me, so I'm going to continue to move forward. There's no going back for me. So, I went to TCMI's Teen Challenge Ministry Institute, where we learn leadership skills, ministry skills. And so, after completing my TCMI program, which was another 12 months, they asked me if I would come over and do an internship here in Tri-Cities. So, I did an internship there for about six months, and then they asked me if I would come on as a staff member, and so I decided to trust God, and I said, "Yes, Lord," and so I was an entry-level staff for another eight months. And then we opened up a thrift store there on Sylvester Street in Pasco to help support our program. And so they asked me to manage the store and I said, "Yes, Lord, I'll do it." And so I ran that store for another three years. And then after successfully running that store for three years, they asked me if I would be the program coordinator for our Seattle men's campus. So I went up there to help the campus, and I was the program coordinator for three years. And then after that, they asked me if I would be the director for the Seattle men's campus and I said, "Yes, Lord." I just kept saying yes. And so I was up there for another five years as a director, and then I was asked if I would come over and come back to Tri-Cities and help our Tri-Cities men's campus, and so I've been here since May. I'm back to the Tri-Cities. So, God brought me on full circle. And I'm so grateful for that. He's prepared me, trained me, and equipped me to come back to the Tri-Cities, so I'm grateful to be here. And like I said, from the bottom of my heart, I truly appreciate everyone's support, your prayers, and your love.

If you guys want more information about Teen Challenge, we're a 12-month, faith-based, recovery program. And our mission is to put hope within reach of every addict. And so we have an information table out there with more information. There's a connect card if you guys want to connect and get our monthly newsletter. There's connect cards out there and then there's also ways to sponsor a student if, you know, God puts it in your heart to do so. But from the bottom of my heart again, I just want to say thank you. And we have more information out there for you guys, if you guys are interested. Thank you so much. Thank you!

Carole Allenbaugh:

I may need some assistance today from Tina because I am definitely a back-of-the-house girl. So, we are Sent to Serve because we're all sent to serve. So, I want you to see, first off, boots on the ground. These people are out there whether it's 3 degrees, or 113 degrees. And what we do is we serve. We love and we serve. You know, we've been out there since 2018. And in the last year, since Central has partnered with us, we just really rocked it. So, when you came in today, did you see the trailer out there? We're going to be pulling that trailer around to at least eight different churches that we've already got lined up, and we're going to be showering and loving on some little, grubby people out there in the community, and giving them the dignity they deserve.

I just want to give you just a couple of numbers here. Because when we started this, we were serving like 20 to 30, then it got to 60. Now it goes anywhere from 100 to 150 people that we serve every Sunday. So, I took down some numbers from October to December 3rd. We did 1600 to 1697 meals, 1237 pairs of socks, 441 blankets, 889 hygiene kits, 15 medical (that could be anything, unfortunately, from fixing a wound to delivering Narcan), 14 backpacks, 33 pairs of shoes, 20 sleeping bags. We've got 11 people to rehab, 3 of them we have housed, 69 ponchos, and 34 tarps.

So, like I said, we're simple. We go out there. We love them. We serve them. We don't turn anybody away. We do their ID cards. We help them with all their paperwork because some of our folks can't even read. And I just can't tell you, but I feel like I'm on an Academy Award show. I can't thank everybody! You know, I just want to thank the One who got us here. Thank you, Church!

Debbie Dickman:

Thank you, Carole and Carole's team, and everybody in the church who has helped with the preparation of the meals, or provision of anything that Carole's team has used. We are, as you can see, truly blessing the community.

Pastor John Mars:

You are, indeed, the hands and the feet of Christ. You are making a difference, not only here in Tri-Cities, but around the world. And this is our commitment to continue to be a blessing, to continue to be the hands and feet of Christ. So, Central, bless you, and God continue to make us a blessing!