

Georgianna

Dear Church Family,

For the last 18 years we have celebrated what we call “Simple Christmas.” An attempt to reclaim this season and refocus our attention to the One the season is named for. This has meant a recalibration of how you spend your time and resources under the banner of CHRIST. Simple Christmas invites you to be intentional about your Sundays; that a genuine sabbath might be found in starting your day with God and then giving the rest of it to just family and friends, to not add to the chaos. The church likewise promises not to pile on with activities and endless service demands. We want our Christmas to be about worship and giving ourselves away.

To that end, each year we designate some opportunities for families to reprioritize their resources and giving in a way that honors our Lord, who came to give it all away. This is a great teaching opportunity for families as we take a moment and intentionally think about the least of these in our world. We have chosen 3 ministries for you to make a prayerful gift towards. Deedie and I try to break our gift up evenly across all three ministries, but if one grabs your heart, then by all means make your full gift towards them.

In keeping with our 2024 vision of *Harvest*, all our outreaches will have to do with food insecurity locally, nationwide, and internationally. Here they are...

Children’s Hunger Project (Local)- This ministry is no stranger to us as we have been long-time partners in feeding school-age children for years. They are now serving more than 4500 students each week and still there remain hundreds of children who are waiting to be put on the list to receive this weekend supplement. I have often said that this is the most solvable crisis in Brevard County. If everyone, individuals and corporations, committed to see no child go hungry for any reason it could be fixable, and yet it remains unfixed. We have a chance to make a difference in the life of a child, and all of it ripples forward to us becoming the beautiful community we can actually be.

Society of St. Andrews (Nationwide)- This is a gleaning ministry that gathers leftover produce after the harvest that is generally destined to never be collected and often destroyed. This is all about finding abundance where others find scarcity. The Society of St. Andrews has been operating in Florida since 1995, and last year more than 10 million pounds of fresh produce was gleaned and distributed. Florida allows for year-round gleaning that again allows for fresh foods to find hungry people all year long. Leviticus 19 makes it clear, “when you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the edges of your field, or gather gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time, leave them for the poor among you.” This is a great ministry that is the tip of the spear in addressing our nation's food insecurities.

Mission of Hope (International)- While the world has forgotten Haiti, we have not. The people of Haiti live in a war zone that contributes to food insecurity every day. People are starving. Mission of Hope has come in and has begun training local Haitians in sustainable farming to grow their own crops, which will provide both food and a reliable source of income for the farmers.

Until you have held a child with a distended belly and parasites from eating dirt cookies, you cannot fully appreciate the severity of the problem or believe it is even a real thing. I assure you it is a real thing. This ministry could be a generational game changer in Haiti.

This Christmas won't we harvest a great blessing for those who have none? Beyond our weekly tithe, this is one of the easiest checks Deedie and I write all year and does so much more good than participating in obligatory giving exchanges with our friends. This is our chance to make both eternal and daily differences in the lives of those who are hurting. Lastly, I love that we can do this together, united in love to love in the same measure we have been loved.

Merry Simple Christmas,

Pastor Corkey Calhoun