



#SHOEBOX STORIES

Alex and
A Candy Cane

A small candy cane brought a big smile to my face when I received a shoebox gift in an orphanage following the Rwandan genocide.

Newsletter November 2020

Imagine the excitement of 250 children in an orphanage who had never before received a gift, each holding shoeboxes from **Operation Christmas Child**. We were so curious. What was inside these boxes? Finally, there was a countdown and we opened the lid and looked inside! Kids began screaming left and right, not because they were sad but because of their joy to receive a gift for the very first time. As I opened my shoebox I saw school supplies, hygiene items such as toothpaste and a toothbrush, socks, underwear, and a watercolor paint set. Some of these items were foreign to me. I looked at the paintbrush—I didn't know what it was. I looked at the paint—it was colorful but I didn't know what it was either. I looked at Smarties and wondered what they were. I thought they were medicine. Everything was new! Nearly all of my senses were being used. I was feeling, touching, smelling to figure out what it was. One of my favorite items was discovered using my other sense—my sense of taste. I had no idea what it was when I ate this item with the plastic still on it. It was sweet. It was very pepperminty. It tasted like something I didn't expect. That was my first time eating a candy cane. A hair comb was the item that I kept the longest. This wasn't a typical comb. When you opened it on one side there was a pick and by opening the other side with a twist, a brush would come out. I took this comb with me everywhere I went for the next three years. Each and every item in that shoebox brought me joy at a time when I had lost all hope. I didn't see how Jesus Christ was working at that time, but an eternal seed was planted in my heart in that moment. A year later, I realized the many things God did in my life to bring me where I was. My Mom passed away with AIDS when I was a very little boy. During the Rwandan genocide my grandmother and uncle were killed right in front of me. People argued about whether or not to kill my entire family. A bullet missed my head by an inch. We walked for miles and miles, sleeping in the bushes, the dirt, and abandoned buildings. In the end I was put in an orphanage. That box gave me joy when there was nothing left. Something as small as a candy cane put a smile on my face even when I didn't know what it was. God used that moment to give me a glimpse of greater joy that is in Him. In the years that followed, I wrestled a lot with "why?" Why am I alive? Why did God spare my life through the war? Why did God take away the people I loved? Through the mentorship of people around me and through **Jeremiah 29:11**, I began to see that **God had a plan for my life**. I could look back and see the miracles since the day I was born. I could not ignore His presence in my life. One of those moments was receiving a shoebox right after the genocide. A simple candy cane might seem small and insignificant but at that moment as a 7-year-old, I needed to be reminded that someone loved me, someone still cared. It was such a joyful moment I will never forget.

Starting in 2017, candy and toothpaste will not be allowed in shoebox gifts due to customs regulations. We remain confident, however, that your gift will still delight a child in need.



www.FBCRAMSEY.ORG

*Bring your donations to the church--the kids & youth will pack boxes.

From Pastor Jeff

“He said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim the name Yahweh before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Exodus 33:19

As we have gone through this dumpster fire of a year, Thanksgiving seems like maybe it ought to be canceled this year. Between viruses, social unrest, political turmoil, murder hornets, and the maybe the worst of all, toilet paper hoarders, there doesn't seem to be a lot to be thankful for this year. But we couldn't be more wrong!

God has been so good to us through all of this. God has shown His love and mercy to us over and over. You see, when things are going good, it is easy to take for granted those times. But when things get bad, it forces us to stop and reflect on the goodness of God.

The goodness of God is not something we really talk about a lot anymore, but it doesn't mean it has gone away, or isn't important anymore. After all, shouldn't we focus more on the sensational aspects of who God is? Shouldn't we laud worship and praise on the Creator and the Sustainer of existence itself? Isn't "goodness" kind of beneath Him? Isn't it reserved for childish church songs? Haven't we grown beyond it?

There are so many great attributes of God, His goodness gets overlooked. But without His goodness, we would not have so many of the other attributes we do talk about frequently like His grace and mercy. God is so incredible that goodness seems to be inadequate in describing the character and person of God. And yet, He is good.

That goodness is directed towards us and we can know Him because of it.

So as we sit around the table of thanks this year, reflect not on the trials and challenges this year has wrought, but rather on the goodness of God, Who has brought us through them. Celebrate in the fact He is good... all the time.

Following Him,

Jeff



Mission Kids Kickoff



Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry

The deadline is fast approaching for items to be turned in. The Mission Kids will have a shoebox packing party in November.

From Pastor Andrew

As fall kicked off, our **Children's Ministry** was excited to meet. The kids had a great time running around Happy Hollows Family Farm on October twelfth. Many of our kids made some furry friends with the pigs and goats. Before picking out pumpkins from the field, they circled around a corn maze and explored the nature trails around the farm. On October fourteenth, the lively bunch zipped across the playground at Ramsey State Park for the **Mission Kids Kickoff**. From sliding down the slides to cooking hot dogs and marshmallows, the kids enjoyed being back together. Mission Kids will be meeting on Wednesday nights in the gym while taking necessary precautions for COVID. We are looking for **two to three volunteers** to assist with Mission Kids check in and check out on Wednesday nights. We want to check temperatures and give the kids a chance to wash hands before entering the gym. If you would like to fill this need please contact Pastor Andrew @ (618) 699-8602.

The youth have started meeting in the sanctuary Sunday nights for **LIT**. They have enjoyed this time out of the house and seeing friends again. The youth will be meeting at homes while the church is taking precautions for COVID. If you have a large space or outside area, and would like to host the youth for **Ignite** on a Wednesday, please contact Pastor Andrew @ (618) 699-8602. The youth girls will be having a lock-in at the church with some of the ladies as they join a live stream conference on November sixth and seventh.

Mission Kids @ Happy Hollows Farm





SUNDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP

We will have a Baked Potato Bar on Sunday, November 1st at 6pm. The church will provide baked potatoes, toppings and drinks. Please bring side dishes, finger foods and desserts. We always have plenty of food and great fellowship!

Church Council Meeting

will be Sunday, Nov. 15th @ 7 pm to work on the calendar.

Business Meeting is Nov. 11th. We will be voting on the budget for next year.

November Food Pantry

Noodles
Ramen Noodles
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Soup

Tomato Juice
Chili with beans
Pie Filling
Monetary Donations

(use love offering envelope and label Food Pantry)

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Gene Daniels | 21 Joey & Shelby Eddy |
| 1 John & Charlotte Beck | 23 Janie Steele |
| 6 Will & Candi Hayes | 23 Reed England |
| 15 Joe Hill | 25 Delbert & Carol Jo Roberts |
| 17 Sheila Seaton | 25 Delbert Roberts |
| 18 Shane & Jill Hadley | 28 Macey Heselton |
| 19 Gracie Braning | |



Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, Nov. 1st. Don't forget to turn your clocks back on Saturday night!

Community Service

Sunday, Nov. 29, 6 pm
FBC Ramsey
Fellowship after service

First Baptist Church Ramsey, IL 62080

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Return Service Requested

Jeff Shouse, Pastor
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Andrew Lewis, Pastor of Students
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November 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Daylight Saving Time Ends SNF 6pm	2	³ Election Day	4 Ignite 7pm Mission Kids 7pm Bible Study 7pm	5	6 AWESOM Girls Conference →	7
8 Deacons' Mtg. 5pm L.I.T. 6pm	9	10	11 Veterans Day Office Closed Business Mtg. 7pm/Budget	12	13	14
15 L.I.T. 6pm Church Council Mtg. 7pm	16	17	18 Ignite 7pm Mission Kids 7pm Bible Study 7pm	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 No Evening Services	26 Thanksgiving Office Closed	27	28
29 Community Service @ FBC @ 6pm	30					