

Thank You and Merry Christmas First Baptist Greenville

We are in that transition time between the season of Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent. Actually, Advent has already begun and we are just now catching up with our traditions. We find ourselves still caught in the spirit of “thanksgiving” because we are not finished with being thankful. Maybe there is a reason for that. Surely it is appropriate to begin Advent in a spirit of overwhelming appreciation. To that end, we are writing you**.

We want to thank each one of you individually, and by name. That means that we are sure to overlook someone, inadvertently. Please forgive us ahead of time. It will be completely unintentional***. However, it is important for us to try to thank you, by name, because we WANT you to know how much we appreciate what you have done for us.

We want to thank you for all you’ve done for us in this past year—as well as the past 2 ½ years we’ve been on this mission field in Hungary. I (Clista) have just passed my 54th birthday, and I find myself still reeling with the number of cards and letters I received from friends in Greenville. It was literally “a card shower,” and I am still enjoying the results. Thank you.

Thank You for Sending Supplies, Clothes, Gifts!

This year, friends at First Baptist have sent money, boxes of clothes, school supplies, Christmas/Valentines/Easter gifts for the Gandhi kids, school supplies and books, and toiletries. EVERY SINGLE thing has been given and used by a Roma student, child, or teacher who needed something. When we had extras, we took them to Gypsy children or teachers in Romania or sent them to Gypsy children in Roma house–churches around Hungary. We have used every penny and every item you sent. So, thank you Becky and Ralph Bouton, Ethel and Jim Childress, Elaine and Bill Sarratt, Amy and Ben Waldrop, Adkins/Bouton Sunday School Class, Crazy Eights Circle, Margaret Allen Aiesi Circle, Ruth Reid, Marge King, Clista Adkins Circle, FBC Mission teams, Laura Shelley, Alecia Elrod, . . . (I’m leaving out someone, I know)

Glen and I continue to be amazed at how God uses every loaf and fish to feed someone or to open a door to the Good News. God multiplied your loaves and fishes in ways that we couldn’t imagine and, as a result, we had the opportunity to share the Good News with more folks than we expected.

Thank You for Coming or Sending Others!

We also want to thank you for sending mission teams. Mission teams and individuals from First Baptist Greenville have had a huge impact on this school in recent years. Your teams have taught English in the classroom, served pizza suppers, hosted teacher appreciation luncheons, conducted Bingo games, sponsored talent shows, and shared the Good News over and over again in many different ways. What a gift you have given these Roma students!

Then, the church and the Crazy Eights Circle sent Allison Taylor, who helped us with classes and choir, led Bible Club, made fleece scarves at Bible club, shopped with Ibolya and spent lots of hours working with our Roma students. Your efforts have made a HUGE difference in the whole school. Even with the difficult school administration change this summer, the entire student body and faculty have opened their hearts and lives to us in unprecedented ways as a result of your energy and love—in the name of Jesus—poured into this place. Thank you!

We are looking forward to the mission team’s arrival in February because we know that the power of God’s love that flows through all of the Greenville folks will warm and

lighten that dreary month here in Pecs. The students have been asking about your team since last September and are avidly awaiting their week with you!

We are also looking forward to a week with Sara Webb and Rebecca Crowe during their spring break. Then, we are looking forward to the arrival of Scott (Bootie) Cothran to film a DVD of the choir on its mini-tour around southern Hungary and Croatia. What great ambassadors you send out into the world! Thank you!

Thank You for Sending Money!

I want to thank you who have sent money to our Gandhi ministry and program at the school. We have appreciated every single penny. We have been very careful not to waste one penny of your offering and to be responsible for spending your offering in ways that directly helped the students. We know that your offerings to God, that you direct through this Gandhi ministry, are a sacred trust, and we never take that trust lightly. Thank you.

Thank you for the funds you sent that helped to send students on our choir tour to the Roma villages in NE Hungary and Slovakia this summer. Thank you for the funds that bought a keyboard to use with the choir and at our weekly Bible Club. Thank you for the funds you contributed so that we could get kannas, guitars, and a mandolin for the choir. Thank you for your contributions that allowed me to get English teaching supplies for last spring and this fall. Thank you for the funds you sent that help us to have snacks at Bible Club and Choir every week. Your funds have also helped us to transport Gandhi students to and from Budapest for interviews and to visit some of these students in their homes. Your funds have provided emergency relief and travel money for a couple of students, and your funds have funded countless small needs of students this year.

None of these activities would have been possible without your money, your offerings, your gifts. Thank you.

Thank you to . . . David and Julie Cline; Margaret Allen Aiesi Circle; Crazy Eights Circle; Clista Adkins Circle; Fellowship Sunday School Class; Sara and Mel Lamkin; Bootie Cothran; Fidelis Sunday School Class; Becky and Ralph Bouton; Paul and Nancy Goldsmith; Sonny and Keeter Horton; Twinkle Hoskins; Tom and Janet Huskey; George and Cele Irwin; John and Janice Johnson; Marge King; Dr. and Mrs. Basil Manly; Nancy McKittrick; Gene and Betty Morin; Burt Pardue; Hazel Monteith; Eugenia Potter; Ruth Reid; Virgil Story; Jerry and Mary Wylie; Barbara and David McMaster; Missions Committee; and other nameless but generous donors.

Thank You for Helping Gandhi Students!

Some of you have also helped individual students here in Hungary and there in America. You have aided, hosted, funded, encouraged, emailed, and prayed for Dori, Gabor, Balazs, Ricsi, Timi, and E.T. over the past 18 months. Then, you hosted Timi Bogdan for ten days during August and September. If you read her thank-you note in the *News*, you know how her trip really changed her life. The value of your work with her cannot be measured. Thank you.

Thank you Susan/Frank/Sara Webb, Allison/Mittie/Bert Taylor, Jim and Ethel Childress, Paula Wynn, Becky and Ralph Bouton, Elaine and Bill Sarratt, Greg/Catherine/Rebecca/Caleb Crowe, Laura Shelley, and the all of the youth at First Baptist Greenville . . . (I am sure that there are many more.)

Thank you for Helping Us!

Thank you, also, for all that you have sent to us, personally! When I think back over the year and look around me in our flat, I am just astounded at what you have done for us. You have sent coffee, cereal, books, letters of news and encouragement, warm socks and

fleece blankets, pecans, pictures and cards, Girl Scout cookies, brownie mixes, chocolate chips and marshmallows, funny notes, circle rosters and church newsletters, and regular emails. We have “an embarrassment of riches” here in this little apartment! So thank you Annelle and Dick Locke, Alecia Elrod and all the families at FBC Greenville who sent us the Girl Scout Cookies, Lauren McDonald/Leigh Joye/Melissa Janse/Catherine Johnson/Amy Waldrop (who send me letters and pictures of their children), Ethel and Jim, Paula and Baxter, Becky and Ralph, Elaine and Bill, the Adkins/Bouton SS class, Ruth Reid, Marge King, . . .

You have also called in, delivered, picked up, and mailed prescriptions; located shampoo and lotions; posted DVDs and CDs; sent contacts; hauled electronics and personal items across the ocean to us; and provided other VERY important things for us. Wow! How can we ever repay you? Because you have done all of these things, we are snug in this apartment, surrounded by the things that make life easier and brighter. So, thank you! Thank you . . . Paula Wynn, Ethel Childress, Becky Bouton, Elaine Sarratt, Jim Childress, Louis Mathis, Connie Glass, Eldon and Linda Russ, Duke McCall, Mike Payne, Bootie Cothran, Jane and Henry Watkins, Harriet Major, Frances Ridgill, Peggy and Ed Good, Laura Shelley, Susan and Don Shelley, . . . I am sure that I have overlooked a name that I think is already typed. If I have omitted your name, please forgive me.

Thank You for Praying!

The most important thing you have given us has been your prayer. Oh how we feel your prayers. The power of prayer is an amazing miracle of God. We are constantly and faithfully lifted up by your prayers, even when we feel overwhelmed by the physical and spiritual needs all around us. This experience has taught us about the absolute and valuable power of prayer. We have been unbelievably blessed by your faithful prayers and by your prayer notes and cards. We hang every one on our bulletin board to remind us of you and your prayers!

You have helped us in ways we cannot measure. For example, I know that every day, at 3 p.m. EST, my friend Paula Wynn prays for me (and for Glen and our girls). This has been going on for 2 ½ years now . . . every day. Is there any greater gift than that one? I cannot imagine it. I know that Paula’s prayers have pushed me over some tough barriers and have lifted me over the impossible ones. When I think that Paula’s prayers have joined with yours, I wonder if there is anything that is truly impossible. I remember that Jesus said, “. . . with God, all things are possible. (Mark 10:27)” So thank you. Thank you.

Thank you to Paula Wynn, to the Monday prayer group at FBC Greenville, and to all of you who pray for us so faithfully!

We know that this is a long letter, but it doesn’t begin to cover the hundreds of ways you have supported and encouraged us and strengthened the ministry with Roma students and teachers at Gandhi and in southeast Hungary. Please accept our thanks and be assured of our constant gratitude for your interest and efforts and our prayers for you (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3).

Please also remember that WE STILL NEED YOU! Please don’t give up, now. Your faithfulness is a witness both to the Gandhi kids and to us. So, please continue to pray for us and the work here. The mission field here is huge; the laborers are few; the work is slow; and the window of opportunity is narrow. Nevertheless, God works! God does miracles! We see it every day, in small ways and in large. So please keep praying! We are attaching a prayer request page, in case you would like some specifics!

We are really looking forward to your mission team's arrival in the cold month of February, and we are here for another 7 months. That means that there is plenty of time for others of you to come see the Gandhi School and meet some of the students to whom you have ministered with your prayers and interest. We would love to have you visit anytime.

We wish you a peaceful and love-filled Christmas,
surrounded by the blessings of God. Thank
you for being our church family. We love you.

p.s. We loved listening and singing with the beautiful music yesterday as we worshiped with you online. Thank you for that, too.

***If I have omitted a name, please forgive me, know that you are included in my mind and heart, and LET ME KNOW!!!! I want to thank you, not hurt your feelings! I am just typing names as fast as they come to mind, so I am sure that I have skipped typing names that have already flown across my brain.

** I wish this was an individual letter instead of a group e-mail. It would more correctly communicate my feelings. However, I hope you will believe that I am thinking of you, individually, as I type this letter.