

THE THOMAS FAMILY

Serving Together Since 2016 • Panama

"You crown the year with your goodness and your paths drip with abundance."

Psalm 65:11 (NKJV)

From our family to yours, we wish you a very Happy New Year!!! As Psalm 65:11 says, **we pray that 2026 may be crowned with His goodness and that you may follow in His perfect paths that lead you in His amazing abundance.** We encourage you to adopt this theme, motto, and/or goal for this year: "More Jesus."

Stephen and I simplified our version of last year by setting goals as individuals, as a married couple, as a family, and as a ministry. We chose a word or phrase and a bible verse for each category. For instance, for me (Kendra), I kept hearing the phrase "Abide in me" because Jesus says in John 15:4-11 to abide in Him who is the vine. So I personally chose that phrase or motto that I can repeat throughout the day to help me re-center my focus on Him. As for my bible verse, the Lord impressed on me one of my favorite bible verses, Matthew 6:33, which says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." There are times in our lives when things happen, and you realize they aren't coincidences, but God demonstrating His personalized love for you. I have been participating in a 21-day fast with Highland of the Church for years now, and if you've never heard of it or done it for the new year, I highly recommend it to you. It's powerful, encouraging, it is weight being lifted off our shoulders; **it's simply a time to abide in Him.**

Ministry Updates

We were in the process of hiring a part-time Panamanian social worker to review our "Plan de Trabajo", also known as our "Work Plan", and other documents we have created for the ministry. We have some good news! Elisa, our new social worker, will be an integral part of our process of setting up the ministry. Please keep us in your prayers as we dive into the technical aspects of how our ministry operates with her and our team.

In other news, the environmental study we submitted at the end of November is still under review. The engineer requested supporting document requirements from the new administration. We also recently met with our architect to finalize more details for the buildings, and will review these with the engineers before implementing them.

At the end of November, Stephen and Noah took a trip to an Indian reservation with our staff to present a training on the importance of parenting. To get to the village, it was a 6-hour drive with another 3-hour hike through the mountains, thick mud, and rivers. There was one generator to give them an hour of light and cell service at night. Stephen and Noah overall had a great time, and we will be taking a trip with our whole family in February to another Indian reservation to support some churches and teach parents and kids about functional families.



Family Updates

We have had a very busy time as a family! **Esther** turned two a few days before Christmas. We celebrated her birthday as well as Christmas with my family in Texas. Esther absolutely loves listening to “ballerina” music on the TV, and she tries her best to copy their moves. We may have a little dancer on our hands! Just a few short days later, **Noah** turned 6. He just lost his first tooth! He has been resistant to learning Spanish, but now he has shown more interest. He has been having a good time overall in school. We hope and pray that he continues to apply himself so that he can easily communicate with his friends.

Ezra has been doing great! He loves homeschooling with me. Ezra and Stephen have been reading through the Chronicles of Narnia series, which he loves. Ezra constantly asks, “What’s going to happen?” anytime Stephen stops reading. He is definitely our family clown and always keeps us guessing what funny thing will come out of his mouth next!

Partnering through Prayer

We would like to continue this year in carving out a space for prayer where we ask for your petitions. We would also like to end each newsletter with a prayer, too – a prayer of blessing and encouragement!

Dear Lord, we come before You, lifting up every person who receives our updates. Lord, we pray Romans 15:13 over each one of them. May You fill them all with joy and peace as he/she trusts in You, so that he/she may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. We lift up their needs to You, which You know so perfectly, as You know the number of hairs on their heads (Matthew 10:30; Luke 12:7).

You created them for a divine, unique purpose, one of which is to glorify Your name! Today and every day, we give You glory and praise for Your continued goodness and faithfulness. Thank You for Your unfailing love, Your joy which is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10), and Your peace. We surrender our worries and choose to trust in You, even though it can be hard sometimes.

Bless each person mightily, Lord. We love You, Jesus! Blessed be Your Holy Name! In Jesus name, AMEN!



- Stephen, Kendra, Noah, Ezra, & Esther Lily

Support

Thank you for partnering with **Stephen Jr & Kendra Thomas** in seeing His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven! Thank you for your gifts and prayers.

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