



“Extravagant love often means coloring outside the lines and going beyond the norms.”
-Bob Goff

Hope & Haiti

December 2018

Hello!

I hope this newsletter finds you doing well and staying as warm as possible! I've seen lots of pictures of snow and ice on facebook and you are all making me question my plans to travel back to Indiana for Christmas!

This is my favorite time of the year. The season post Thanksgiving and pre-Christmas. I love the idea of families gathering together and sharing what they are thankful for. Thanksgiving pushes each of us to reflect and share with others those things we are grateful for that might have otherwise gotten lost in the shuffle of life. The “high” of Thanksgiving gives us a push towards Christmas and the idea of once again gathering together to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The anticipation for Christmas morning is something that can be felt by all us no matter how old we are.

Early in November I started intentionally listing things I was thankful for. What I found was that this year it was really hard for me to start this list. Instead of the normal flow of thoughts I sat in what felt like complete brokenness. This year has just been hard. It's felt too messy and emotionally I've felt like I've been all over the place. And yet, as I thought through each hard moment I began to realize that He was there all along. In my head I knew He was there but my heart was struggling to connect the two. I started to realize that the “church” showed up in some very big ways this year for me personally. I realized that others loved me in some really big ways and many of those people didn't even know just how much they were speaking to my heart. As I was listening to a sermon I heard this quote and it just stopped me “Our passion should be to live as a complete outpouring of Christ so anyone and everyone that comes in contact with us comes in contact with Christ” -Bianca Orloff.

As I looked back over the moments that I felt crippled with the pain



Prayer requests!

* Please pray for the believers in our community and our church family to be bold in loving and serving each other. Pray for our church to be the hands and feet of Christ and for our community to know that the church is a place where they can learn more about Him.

* Pray for our staff team as many will be traveling for the holiday's. Pray that the time away is filled with lots of fun family memories and is refueling!

*Pray that I would continue to listen and hear from the hearts of those I have the opportunity to serve and walk this journey with. That I would be patient and learn to listen more than speak.

(Continued) and brokenness I realized there was an army of people who were simply leading me back to Christ. These people weren't doing all the "church" things but rather they were simply showing up. They were sending me phone minutes so when I was in the hospital with a sick child I could stay in contact with everyone. Friends and even people I had never met were sending me messages that were filled with prayers and encouragement. People were simply walking this journey with me and allowing me the space to cry, process, and figure things out. And as I started to list off the things I was thankful for this November I realized that I was seeing His face all over this last year.

There is so much pressure to get life right. To say the right words and get the right gift or create the best meal for your company. And yet, what this year has taught me is that most of us are looking for real people to simply do this life with. Real friends who will pray with us and who will also fill in the gaps with the mundane daily stuff. The way others have loved me has compelled me to love those around me in the same way. To simply sit and give hugs. To listen instead of offering advice. And to be intentional with greeting and having conversations with those who are hurting and sitting off to the side. I've found that it doesn't take a big moment or something planned out to help someone else feel loved and known.

So many of the patients I care for in the clinic and kiddos I get to do life with in the village are hurting and for various reasons there isn't an easy solution to fix their problems. And yet, I don't really think I've been called to "fix" anything for them. I get to show up and be faithful with loving and encouraging those around me. And I get to cheer on momma's as they fight oh so hard for their little ones. My deepest desire is that my life will be an outpouring of His love. As I look to the start of a new year I have decided to focus on being more simple and allowing Him the space to do the rest.

I can't express just how thankful I am for you and for your prayers as I continue to live this life. The days feel pretty long and yet the years have literally flown by. As I look around I can't help but be thankful that He has placed me here. I look forward to starting another year getting to live this life with my Haitian friends and family. Thank you for supporting me both in prayer and financially over this last year (and for many of you over the last 7 years!). I truly value the sacrifice you make in order to help make this life possible for me. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and New Year filled with lots of sweet moments with family and friends! Love, Brooke



Staying Connected!

*Financial Support:

-Mail check to:

Brooke Smalley

7014 W. Yant St.

Silver Lake, IN. 46982

Check written to: Nehemiah Vision Ministries

Memo line: Intern 3

-Online donation:

www.nvm.org/get-involved/invest/financial/staff-support/

-Select under staff support Brooke Smalley.

You will also be able to select a one time or monthly donation.

***NEW email newsletter:** to be added to the list email me at brookes_00@yahoo.com

*Facebook: brooke smalley

Instagram: smalleybrooke

(instagram is updated much more often!).

*Mailing address

(from this mailing address the mail is sent on to me in Haiti):

Brooke Smalley

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NVMHT #2230

Ft Pierce, FL. 34946



Christmas!

I've found that living in the Caribbean sort of removes all the things that make the Christmas season *feel* like Christmas. I grew up in Indiana so naturally I don't just start humming Christmas carols when I'm walking to the village wearing my flip flops and sweating because it's still in the upper 90's out and sunny. Chambrun doesn't have electricity so the houses aren't decorated in flashing lights and there are no yard decorations outside either. The one thing that does bring the Christmas season to life though is watching as the women come back from market with their donkeys loaded with food and charcoal. As I walk the road and greet women and children who are riding the donkey's as they head for home my advent devotions all of a sudden come to life. In our area there aren't big celebrations for Christmas and most children won't receive gifts or really notice that the day is much different than any other day. The church is the place where everyone will gather though to pray and worship long into the night Christmas Eve. I found that where as there are lots of traditions I love about Christmas, I also love the simplicity of it here too. I love that everyone gathers in the church to celebrate Christmas together and I love that it's the youth group who plans activities for the youth in our community. I also love hearing the school children sing different songs they learn in school as they celebrate. I'm thankful that we are able to celebrate the birth of Christ in a simple and yet special way.