

January 2024



Thai Times w/ Amy Cottle



Live to be forgotten so that Christ might be remembered. – D.E. Hoste

Dear friends and family,

Happy New Year! I hope your 2024 has started off well for each of you. I am excited that our Christmas outreaches went really well this year! I was able to get some rest after Christmas since I had a horrible head cold from Christmas day into the new year.

Christmas 2023 recap

We had a lot of Christmas activities– singing Christmas carols at government offices and a local community, baking cookies (700!) with students, and a party at our church plant. Below are additional highlights of the season for our team.

Elementary schools. With a much larger team now, the outreaches are a lot easier as the work gets spread out.



For the second year, we were able to help out 2 former students, On and Praew, who are Christian teachers in two small village schools. The children were so excited for our return and were waiting for us when we arrived. Praise the Lord for our Thai co-workers, Wit and Muey, who told the Christmas story to the children this year. We had a few students pray to Jesus for the first time!

Top L: Children praying to Jesus Top R: Q&A about the Christmas story
Bottom L: Early morning village outing Bottom R: Cute dog joins the party

University students. We were able to have 3 Christmas parties with our regular freshman, sophomore and junior students. Additionally, we had a party at the Department of Pharmacy and at a smaller university in town. Everyone was presented with the Good News of Jesus! We will continue to meet with these students for the rest of the semester, which ends in early April. We are praying that there will be students courageous enough to accept Jesus into their lives.



Top: The team with "gingerbread" houses
Bottom L: Students with their house Bottom R: Another MSU party, playdough mangers

Local community. We had 2 parties in the local community. One party was held at a senior center and another one was for the parents and children of our Saturday English class. Both were well-attended and enjoyed by all who came. We are hoping that as we enter 2024, we can have cell groups with people interested in learning more about Jesus in three communities.



*Top L: Seniors at the senior center party Top R: Playing a Christmas game
Bottom L: Party in the Don Na community Bottom R: Auntie Khian, a community leader*

What God has been teaching me

In Thailand, Christmas is seen as a festival and a party. Most people do not know the true meaning of Christmas but they enjoy a party. In the busyness of outreaches, the true meaning of Christmas can get lost so I enjoyed reading through the advent devotional, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* by Jonathan Gibson. It helped keep my eyes focused on the true meaning of Christmas and how profound it is that God would become human to reconcile us to Him! One word kept going through my mind this season...comfort (Isaiah 40:1). It comes at a pivotal time in the book when Isaiah begins looking to the future in this chapter and reminds the Israelites that God hasn't forgotten His people. So I have chosen '**comfort**' to be my **Word of 2024** as I, too, look to the future and remember that He hasn't forgotten you or me either! The Hebrew word used for comfort here means to strengthen, to encourage and to instill a sense of security [John N. Oswalt]. As I enter 2024, I want to strengthen, encourage and speak of the peace that Jesus brings. I hope you find the words from this old German Christmas hymn as inspiring as I do:

*"Comfort, comfort all my people; speak of peace," so says our God.
"Comfort those who sit in darkness, groaning from their sorrows' load.
Speak to all Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover, that their warfare now is over."*

Thank you for reading through my prayer letter and partnering with me in all the ways God has led you to partner with me. I would love to hear from you so please keep in touch.

May the God of all comfort be with you in 2024!

Amy Cottle

Prayer requests:

- Praise the Lord for a great Christmas season w/ many opportunities to tell people about Jesus!
- Pray for On and Praew, two Christian teachers, to grow in their faith and to put Jesus first in their lives
- Pray that the seeds planted at the elementary schools will grow to saving faith one day
- Continue to pray for the university students to open their hearts to the message of hope that we bring
- Pray that the team can find people in the local community who want to know more about Jesus
- Pray for me that I will comfort others and speak of the hope & peace of Jesus in 2024

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