

BE ONE TOGETHER

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News from the Tyas family  
Serving in WA among the Hispanic community  
December 2021

*From the Notes of Ed and Gerry...*



Dear family and friends,

We had many opportunities to meet new people in November and December. Our area suffered a severe flood in mid-November, caused by a combination of heavier rains than we can remember, along with temperatures warm enough to melt the snow in the mountains. As a result, the Nooksack River got out of it's normal route to the bay and made it's way through parts of Everson and Nooksack, then ran down through the fields about 6 miles to Sumas, where it took out ½ mile of railroad, then wandered through town (up to 5' deep), before jumping the border into Canada and swamping about 30 square miles of the Fraser Valley, cutting off all land travel to Vancouver from the rest of Canada.

According to local statistics about 1400 structures in our county suffered flood damage as water entered them, leaving many residents with no place to live, and many of their belongings ruined. Two weeks later we experienced a 2<sup>nd</sup> flood which was not as severe but still did more damage and erased some of the cleanup that had been done. On the heels of the 2<sup>nd</sup> flood a 3<sup>rd</sup> flood was threatened but never materialized. This was

unimaginable for this area which does receive occasional floods. The community as a whole was very quick to respond with help. We saw groups washing clothes at the laundromat 5 days a week for those in need, free meals for people daily, clean up days organized, and just a whole lot of kindness shown and the coming together of communities and people. We have participated in many of these opportunities and been blessed and heartbroken at the same time by stories.

\* We volunteered for an opportunity to help as folks in Everson put on a community Thanksgiving dinner for anyone who didn't have a place to have one. We saw over 600 people come either as take out or sit down dinners in the space of 5 hours as to have room for distancing.



\* Gerry has been volunteering at a Church in Sumas which was particularly hard hit.

\* She also helped at the Laundromat. Maria walked in and asked if she could get some water for her house (She had not had water since the floods.) I told her if she brought her clothes back we would wash them for her. She brought back clothes and said that she had not washed since the floods 3 ½ weeks ago. What kindness to her the group did in washing her clothes.



\* Ed helped with tearing out wet sheet rock and insulation for two different homes; the second was in conjunction with Samaritan's Purse, who he had dreamed of being a part of for several years.

We have also been returning to the time of being asked to events such as weddings, quincenarias (15th birthday celebrations, dinners, and programs. We attended a Christmas Program recently acted out by the Children and young adults of a Bible Class Gerry helps out with. The in- person interaction in each of these, even with restrictions, is so good for the soul.

We think of Christ's example of serving others and pray that we would show compassion as He has shown compassion to us.



## TYAS FAMILY CHRISTMAS LETTER 2021

They say the only thing certain about life is that it's unpredictable.

We never know from year to year what a particular year will be like. We make plans, but then accept what God brings to pass.

In spite of restrictions, we managed to live life! Ed's job as an excavator is considered essential. God considers ministry essential also and so we found more creative ways to go about this. In his excavating business, Ed noticed that customers were happy to see him arrive and take care of their water leaks, failed septic systems, etc.; some even to the point of giving him more money than he asked for! We found more opportunities to minister to people and reconnect with

others as we worked for community relief after the flood.

William continues to learn ways to make the computer do what he wants it to do as he helps write software for the American Bible Society as a private contractor. (His side job is helping his parents use their computer:). Douglas enjoys working in grounds maintenance at Cedar Springs Christian Retreat Center (and other interesting things, such as transporting skunks to far regions when they show up on the grounds).

Since Ed couldn't go to Canada to do some volunteer work in September, due to his negative Covid test results not coming back in time, he, Gerry, and William took a 3 day trip to the Olympic peninsula, along with most of the residents of the west coast. Highlights of the trip were when Ed got to help extinguish a miniature forest fire, walking on the Pacific beach and Dungeness Spit, hiking on Hurricane Ridge, and sleeping in a tent on the hardest ground west of the Mississippi.

We had some weather this year, too. New records for heat (three days in a row of over 100 degrees) record rainfall in November (1400 houses with water damage in Whatcom County alone). But the floods gave us the opportunities to help neighbors who suffered damage that we did not. Isn't it a blessing from God to be able to be His hands and feet here on Earth!

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