



Praying in Hope

In difficult times we are called to pray. “The end is near,” the apostle Peter writes “Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply....” How we long to demonstrate our love for our Korean friends with soybeans and supplies. Even as we search for any avenue to provide this help, we ask ourselves how much do we believe in prayer? How much do we believe God can and will do something when it is currently impossible for us to go or send anything that we feel might be of help?

As Christmas approaches, we are reminded of the peace and love we can enjoy in Christ because of a little baby laying in a manger more than 2000 years ago. We can pray for peace. We can pray for calm in the hearts of leaders, for innovative ideas to solve food shortages, and for miraculous provision. We are tempted to think about our own difficulties as our own circumstances change daily. But Peter calls us to “use whatever gift we have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” For now, that stewardship is prayer

and we would love to ask you to join us in this service, full of faith for our friends and those whose lives and situations are much more complicated than ours.

Praying Specifically.

We’d like to ask you as you read this to take a moment of reflection, perhaps with your Bibles open, sitting in a comfortable place. Maybe also have pen and paper in hand as you ponder the Father’s love for His creation. What requests come to mind? What scriptures speak to the physical problems our friends face in North Korea? How might your prayers be directed to help the leaders, workers, and children God has given us a part in caring for?

There are some obvious requests to be sure. Korean winters are cold and heating supplies are limited at best. There is a food shortage across the entire country. There is no doubt increased illness resulting from poor nutrition. But as you sit, reflect, and pray, we welcome you to send us your thoughts. Let us know what you prayed for and

**“ Finally...
be like-minded,
be sympathetic,
love one another,
be compassionate
and humble. ”**

1 Peter 3:8



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we will pray with you, saving these precious prayers for a time when we may hear about how they were answered.

With the dawn of a new year, we trust in the Lord to protect and provide for vulnerable children in North Korea and to guide our work at First Steps. We hope that we will see a breakthrough during 2022 in the seemingly impregnable anti-COVID measures which have prevented us from being active on the ground.

We can't forget to be thankful. Please join us in giving thanks for the following:

- Time to rest and reflect over the Christmas season.
- Ongoing communication with our partners in North Korea.
- Faithful volunteers in the First Steps Office who devote their time on a regular basis.
- Many notes and words of encouragement from First Steps supporters over recent months.

As we consider the new year, we also ask for guidance in our prayers, and the following comes to mind:

- For an opening of the border to allow humanitarian aid to enter the country.
- For encouragement for the workers who are committed to the care of children.
- For strength for women giving birth during the cold, dark winter months.
- For healthy growth in young children living in homes with food insecurity.
- For First Steps supporters who are ill or waiting for surgeries and for supporters who are dealing with various difficulties in their work, lives, and families as a result of COVID.



Wonsan Yangji Daycare

“ I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year ‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.’ And he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way.’ ”

— Minnie Louise Haskins



Tongchon Pungsan Kindergarten

Requesting Prayer

By way of a situational update here is some current information that might direct your prayers.

As this goes to print, December weather in the locations where we work in DPR Korea:

Hyesan	-28°C	Pochon	-28°C
Munchon	-13°C	Tongchon	-11°C
Yonsa	-26°C	Hyongjesan	-12°C
Nampo	-12°C	Wonsan	-13°C
Samjiyon	-31°C	Dokchon	- 24°C



Kim Yun-Kyung with her grandmother awaiting surgery.

News headlines with links to the source:

Crises mount in North Korea as major flooding follows drought, food shortages (NK News, August 4, 2021)

Source: <https://bit.ly/Crises-Mount-DPRK>

Major flooding washed away homes, roads and bridges along North Korea's east coast. The floods come on the heels of a month-long heat wave and drought in July that state media said damaged crops and may threaten upcoming harvests.

COVAX offers 4.7 million more COVID-19 vaccine doses to North Korea - by Jeongmin Kim

Source: <https://bit.ly/COVAX-DPRK>

COVAX, the WHO program set up for equitable distribution of vaccine supplies, has allocated 4.73 million more AstraZeneca (AZ) COVID-19 vaccines for North Korea. With around 2.1 million AZ vaccines previously assigned, COVAX has now pledged a total of around 6.83 million doses for North Korea — but none have been delivered so far.

North Koreans in Pyongyang face three months without rations

Source: <https://bit.ly/DPRK-no-rations> (also: <https://ab.co/3qwHg1>)

According to this report, Pyongyang residents have not received food rations for months during 2020, a situation that never occurred even at the height of the country's famine period in the mid-to-late 1990s. By the summer of 2021, the country had resorted to distributing emergency military rations to its general population.



“Extra! Extra! Read all about it!”

With shorter days, dark evenings, and uninviting weather patterns abounding, a copy of the First Steps 20th anniversary book could be just what you are looking for during these winter months when the thought of staying inside has become quite enticing.

Filled with compelling narrative, detailing aspects of the journey over the past two decades and interlaced with stunning images captured by award winning photojournalist, John Lehmann, this book is guaranteed to become a treasure in your home.

This would also make a unique gift, as it is not something that anyone can order elsewhere or buy in the shops.

Place your order by completing the form below and then sit back and look forward to the knock of the mailman on the door!

Follow us on social media for weekly updates and photos!

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name _____

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25,000 Photographs

Throughout 2021, First Steps staff have been cataloging more than 25,000 photos taken during numerous trips to North Korea over the course of the past 20 years.

It is a mammoth but rewarding task as the moments, memories, and miracles that may otherwise be forgotten, are encapsulated in these images. Many of these photos remind us of God's desire to ease the pain of the people we work with. We have a special place in our hearts for Yonsa County, for example, because the infrastructure (bridges, homes, clinics, factories, etc.) in the entire valley was wiped out and the lives of around 37,000 people were affected by flooding in 2016. We were later able to set up a soy milk production centre there and have a strong relationship with the community. It's an answer to prayer.



Koreans can always find a reason to smile.

Many of the photos relate to visits made during the first 15 years of First Steps ministry in North Korea. Since 2016, the best of these photos were taken by professional photojournalist John Lehmann, formerly at *The Globe and Mail*.



Mud filled the houses as the river washed out the valley.

Having heard of John through a contact at the *Globe and Mail*, we reached out and asked whether he would be willing to accompany a team to North Korea and capture the story of the flood-induced devastation from behind his camera lens. John called back almost immediately, agreeing to join the First Steps team on the upcoming trip to North Korea. The 2016 trip was the first of five First Steps visits that John



Yonsa flood destruction, 2016.

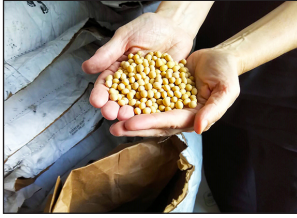
has joined. John has a unique eye for both the circumstantial landscapes of his subjects and the soulful essence of the people he photographs. His work transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries needing little explanation and only the briefest captions. His photographs are humanizing acts of grace, and we are thankful for his generous contributions to our work.

A few years after John joined us in Yonsa County he shared that on the day he received the initial call from First Steps, he had just resigned from his post at the *Globe and Mail*...another testimony to God's amazing timing and a wonderful answer to prayer.



New construction in the flood zone, after Yonsa flooding.

Gifts of Kindness



Soybeans are shipped from Canada to North Korea to make soymilk. One cup of soymilk costs just 3 cents, including shipping. A gift of \$12 typically provides a daily cup for a year.

Donate \$ _____ towards soybeans.



Micronutrient Sprinkles are sachets containing a blend of vitamins and minerals that are added to food. Sprinkles prevent anemia and rickets and lower the rates of diarrhea and pneumonia, the leading causes of death in children under two years of age. A \$50 donation to the Sprinkles program provides nine months of sachets for a pregnant and nursing mother and 18 months of sachets for a baby (6 to 24 months).

Donate \$ _____ towards micronutrient Sprinkles.



20-litre **stainless-steel milk cans** are vital for storing and transporting soymilk from production centres to the children we serve. They cost \$100 each.

Donate \$ _____ towards milk cans.



The **VitaGoat** is powered by *combustible fuel* (wood, coal, etc.). It processes soybeans directly into nutrient-rich soymilk and provides about 1,500 cups of soymilk per day to hungry children. The cost of a VitaGoat is \$5500.

Donate \$ _____ towards a VitaGoat.



VitaCows process soybeans directly into soymilk providing children with a warm and protein-rich drink. The VitaCow is powered by *electricity* and can produce 2000 cups of soymilk per day to feed hungry children. The cost of a VitaCow is \$7000.

Donate \$ _____ towards a VitaCow.

name _____
address _____
city _____ prov. _____ postal code _____
phone _____ email _____

Please make cheques payable to First Steps Health Society and forward to: 3260 West 5th Ave. Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1V4 Canada
BIN: 821724036 RR0001. Gifts are acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

For further information contact us at 604.732.0195 or visit our website at www.firststepscanada.org

Please Recycle or Pass Along. Contact us at info@firststepscanada.org to receive First Steps Newsletter by email.