

January 2016 Prayer Letter

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The Ballou Family in Lamphun City, Thailand



Dear Friends,

2015 was a year full of God's blessings in many ways and we want to give a quick 12 month update. Thank you for your patience as we've been lagging behind on updates here while we've had a huge year of transition here!

January - May: Finished our full time language school and got to focus on the module that focuses on specific Biblical language and words used in prayer.

Outside of language school we had a lot of service opportunities:

- Alisa began ministering at the prison for teenage girls and young ladies twice a week.
- We made regular trips to Lamphun to find a place to live and disciple some new contacts.
- I took a trip to Surin to preach at a conference and make a video for a fellow missionary.
- We helped run a big English camp outreach that is held once a year with our foundation.
- We also began a youth group at Lanna Baptist Church on Saturday nights.



Aralynn Jade, born June 12



I had so much fun running the assembly for our English Camp, and several campers came to know Christ!

- Hannah Ballou, my sister, came to help our family as we serve in Thailand and has been an incredible asset here!

June - August: Worked on our future residence for ministry and life and began **filling in the pulpit for a pastor friend.**

June was the month we made the decision to move into the center of the city and God provided the perfect place for us. Designed to be a shop, it has a large room downstairs with rooms to live in above. A team of four young people came and helped us in a huge way as we dove into repainting everything and changing it from a dress shop to a church, outreach center, and home.

Pastor Srithone Kongkaew went back to the states and asked us to preach at his church, Lanna Baptist in Lampang (two hours from where we were in Chiang Mai) on Sundays. It was truly a great experience and help to our language development, and a blessed opportunity to serve there for those three months.

Also in June, Aralynn Jade was born! We had visits from both of our moms, who also put their share of sweat (hot months!) and labor into the development of our new church and home. We're thankful for them!

At the end of August we moved and began prepping for the open house of what we call here our "Community Center," which is essentially our tool for keeping our doors open all the time to be able to make meaningful relationships with new people on a continual basis through English classes, business and time management courses, and classes on the family.

September - October: Open house for community center and preparation for the opening of our church.

The day of our open house, people were streaming in our doors all day, and we had a huge amount of people sign up for English classes and business classes. These two months and since then, we made so many new relationships and have had opportunities continually to be involved in



Jonathan's sister Hannah, a business accountant with online clientele, moved nearby to help us.



Preaching in Thai at the Surin Baptist Church.



Greeting guests at our open house.



The high school down the block has nearly 4,000 students, some of whom stop by regularly.

the lives of so many new people. The center has been incredible for letting us do the following:

-Obey Christ's command to serve those who may not be able to serve you. (When people ask why we're teaching for free, we can just answer that Jesus wanted His followers to be servants in their community.)

-Make sure our fellowship is not just with Christians.

-Keep us from being in a "foreigner bubble" that makes it hard for us to break into the lives of new people's lives on a regular basis.

November - December: The start of Lamphun Baptist Church!

Regular schedule of outreach and teaching through the center.

November 1- The first service ever! We had a lot of friends drop by that day, past (still unsaved) language teachers, and several of our new English students come as well as new contacts God has brought our way. That day we had ___ people and we were incredibly encouraged.

It is great to feel like we're finding our new rhythm of life - having classes of 12-20 people at 5:00 and 7:00 on Tuesdays and Fridays, and most many mornings teaching individual lessons. About two months into teaching, we've started to have many students begin to ask us about Christianity and we are seeing so many hearts begin to open. (Thank you for your prayers!)

For Christmas, we had a big Christmas party here and our place was packed! I read scriptures that explain our need for a Messiah and the about Jesus being the fulfillment of that need. It was the first time for many of them to get to so clearly hear about Jesus.

As we finished the year, new opportunities have been opening up for us - in fact, more than we can even handle as a family, which is a great problem to have.

-The school where we've enrolled the boys has asked Alisa to teach there once a week. Without being too hard on her schedule, she's made a ton of little friends, has the freedom to make Jesus part of her lessons (it's a Christian school, though there are only three Christian teachers there), and parents are loving her.

-The police station has asked me to teach English to all of their officers



Explaining various opportunities for studying with us.



Packed house for our Christmas Party!



Justin and Brody attend an all Thai preschool, where Alisa also teaches English weekly.

once a week in the new year.

-The prison in Lamphun wants us to come teach there in both the men's and ladies' portion - we may wait until we can set up an intern program here.

Thank you so much for letting us partner with you this year, and for your faithfulness to love and support us! We are honored that you pray for our family and ministry here, and look forward to staying in touch more regularly in the coming year! :)

Yours for Christ,

The Ballous

Prayer requests:

Family health in the busyness of having people in our home daily.
The miraculous heart change of people who are exposed to the gospel.
Response to our outreach for the church, and a great first year for the church plant here!



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