



## 2021 ADVENT CALENDAR TO SUPPORT THE AHUAS CLINIC IN HONDURAS CLÍNICA EVANGÉLICA MORAVA

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**\* An Advent that Makes a Difference \***  
**\* Counting Your Blessings So that You Can Support Life-Saving Efforts \***



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## How Can Counting Your Blessings Help Others?

We are blessed more than we realize because rarely do we pause to count the blessings. Day by day, as you follow this Advent calendar, you will be given an opportunity to count many of your blessings. But rather than leave it there, this Advent, we seek to allow our blessings to bless others. Either by yourself or with others, decide how much you would like to donate for each of your blessings to help the Board of World Mission support the medical mission-work being done at the Clínica Evangélica Morava in Ahuas, Honduras, as they celebrate 75 years of blessing others. You may not have some of the blessings listed for one day but be aware that you may count many blessings for other days. Find a jar to collect a penny or a nickel for each of these blessings? Perhaps you can afford to give more. If coins are in short supply around your home, you can use the tally card sheet found at the end of this file to help you with this process. Cut the tally cards off the sheet each day, make note of your blessing, and place it in the jar. At the end of Advent, December 24, we will invite you to total up your blessing count and make that a donation to the Board of World Mission's work. We would count it a blessing to share your blessings with the medical team in Ahuas.

### **Sunday, November 28 – First Sunday of Advent**

- Many people are homeless and go without shelter every day. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." In November 2020, twin hurricanes devastated Central America. Twelve months later, some families are still living in storm-damaged homes without complete roofs or four walls. Count your blessings if you have a roof over your head that keeps you dry and warm.

### **Monday, November 29**

- Jesus fed over 5,000 hungry people by multiplying what little could be found. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you gave me food." While most of us have access to regular meals, the Clínica Evangélica Morava coordinates three sites through its Infant Feeding Program, which provides meals to approximately 125 children every day. This outreach prevents malnutrition, slow physical maturation, and arrested mental growth during crucial periods of early childhood development. Count your blessings for each meal shared in your home today?

### **Tuesday, November 30**

- A comfortable bed in which to find rest is truly a blessing. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus hosted Jesus and the Disciples in their home in Bethany during Jesus' final days, giving them a place to rest. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." One family in the village of Krupunata includes fourteen children who sleep with their parents in two bedrooms on three beds and the floor. The North American custom of providing a single bed for each child is seldom seen in a population that has large families but cannot afford to build beds or buy mattresses for each person. Count your blessings for each bed in your home. Pay double for regularly unused beds.

### **Wednesday, December 1**

- Children in many developing countries walk to school daily without shoes. Think of the difference this simple article of clothing can mean to help make life more bearable. In Matthew 25:36, Jesus said, "I was naked, and you gave me clothing." Count your blessings for each pair of shoes in your home.

### **Thursday, December 2**

- Being able to get where you want to be, when you want to be there, is a blessing we often take for granted. In Luke chapter 10, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan who found a recently attacked man on the road's side. The Samaritan bound up the man's wounds, placed him on his donkey, and took him to an Inn where he could find care. In an area without a developed network of roads, vehicles are a luxury available only to a few more affluent residents of La Mosquitia.

Patients come to the Moravian hospital in Ahuas either by plane or boat, crossing lagoons or moving down rivers, with only the last two miles accessible by the few trucks in Ahuas. Frequently, critically ill patients are forced to travel for hours in all kinds of weather to access the medical services at the Clínica Evangélica Morava. Count your blessings for each vehicle to which the drivers in your household have access. If you have more vehicles than you have drivers, pay double for each additional vehicle.

#### **Friday, December 3**

- Canned food gives most of us easy access to food that can sit on our shelves for months and is ready for us to use at a moment's notice. Because of weight and shipping costs, these cans of food are not often found in developing countries. Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you gave me food." Count your blessings for each can of food on your shelves.

#### **Saturday, December 4**

- The homeless have no access to kitchen appliances, and many families in developing countries cook over an open fire. Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you gave me food." Very few people in Honduras' La Mosquitia have the luxury of a gas stove. Most still cook on a clay stove (*kubus*) made by the women of the household. Efforts to replace the traditional stoves with metal ones with chimneys are intended to reduce the whole family's exposure (especially the predominantly female cooks) to the harmful effects of smoke inhalation. Those programs have not yet enjoyed widespread success. Count your blessings for each kitchen appliance used to cook your food (i.e., stove, oven, microwave, grill, waffle iron, crockpot, etc.).

#### **Sunday, December 5 – Second Sunday of Advent**

- Education has long been a foundational part of the Moravian mission effort. The school is often the first building erected after the worship space is complete in many of our mission areas. In many parts of the world, schools are not easily accessible to families keeping them trapped in a cycle of poverty. Count your blessings if the children in your neighborhood have access to schools.

#### **Monday, December 6**

- Winter spells the beginning of the cold weather months here in North America. Our homeless poor are often found out in the elements 24 hours a day with little to protect them from inclement conditions. Jesus, in Luke 3:11, instructs us that if we have two coats, we should give one away. Count your blessings for every coat in your home.

#### **Tuesday, December 7**

- Clean water is essential for health and hygiene and a blessing that we can easily forget to count. Jesus, in Mark 9:41, encourages us to share a cup of cold water whenever we can as an act of compassion. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink." In Ahuas and the surrounding area, drinking water typically comes from rivers, lagoons, or shallow wells where the liquid often has the color of coffee. Intestinal parasites associated with contaminated drinking water contribute to malnutrition and disease for the whole population, especially children. Count your blessings for every place in your home from which you can get clean water (i.e., faucets, showerheads, perhaps even your refrigerator door).

#### **Wednesday, December 8**

- Jesus is a light that shines in the darkness. Our Moravian Advent stars give evidence of this when they glow from our porches or front windows on a dark night. Our world needs this light right now. A majority of Mískito households do not have access to electricity, so candles, cooking fires, and more recently, for those who can afford them, flashlights provide illumination. In the absence of electricity, people routinely get up with the sunrise and go to bed soon after sunset. Count your blessings for every light bulb in use in your home today.

#### **Thursday, December 9**

- Jesus is often referred to as the great physician because he cured mental and physical illnesses in the Gospels' pages. Doctors are a vital component of the healing that we experience in our lives today. Can you help the Board of World Mission supply medicine, medical equipment, and supplies to people who need healing? Medicine, medical professionals, and the care they supply are simply not available to many persons in La Mosquitia. Simple over-the-counter medicines like aspirin cannot be found in some of the smaller, more remote communities. The Clínica Evangélica Morava, one of only two regional hospitals, has three doctors, seven nurses, support personnel, a pharmacy, x-ray, ultrasound, lab, OR, exam rooms, and twenty in-patient beds. For 75 years, it has been curing illnesses, saving lives, and winning souls for the Lamb. Count your blessings for the number of doctors you have seen in the last year.

#### **Friday, December 10**

- While we can attest that spending power does not equal happiness, we must admit that the convenience of credit cards allows us great freedom to purchase things with ease. Many people in the world could not imagine what this convenience could offer them. Count your blessings for the number of credit cards to which your household has access.

#### **Saturday, December 11**

- Have you ever seen a yard that needed to be mowed in a picture from a developing country? Now think of the money that many North American homeowners spend on keeping our yards looking neat and trimmed. For most Honduran Moravians, the only lawn care implement owned is the same machete used to split firewood, cut up meat, prepare coconuts, harvest sugar cane, or get yucca ready for the cookstove. For families that typically struggle to provide for such basics as food and shelter, spending money on lawn care is seldom a high priority. Grass and weeds are kept short to reduce the number of insects and snakes, but no one owns a lawnmower, lawn tractor, or similar piece of equipment. Count your blessings for the number of power tools you own to care for your lawn (i.e., lawnmowers, trimmers, etc.).

#### **Sunday, December 12 – The Third Sunday of Advent**

- While we claim to be busy people here in North America, the average person watches over three hours of television a day. While TVs have become more and more present in developing countries, many have limited access to them. Count your blessings for every TV in your household.

#### **Monday, December 13**

- Just 25 years ago, cell phones seemed like a dream for most of us - no longer. We have them for safety as well as convenience and entertainment. Because of wireless technology, cell phones could help to improve communication all over the world. Count your blessings for every cell phone in your home.

#### **Tuesday, December 14**

- During this pandemic, with the number of people working from home (including the BWM staff), computers have become essential for doing work. However, many people have no hope of being able to afford either the hardware or the connectivity. Even for the Moravian hospital in Ahuas, computers, access to the internet, and connecting to reliable phone service are constant concerns and IT services are unavailable. Students long to learn how to use computers, but lack of electricity and the high price means that computers are still out of reach for the vast majority of Mískitos. Count your blessings for the number of computers in your home (i.e., notebook, iPad, laptop, or desktop).

#### **Wednesday, December 15**

- Healthy teeth and gums are an essential component for good overall health. But many people either can't afford regular Dentist visits or do not have access to one. The Moravian Hospital in Ahuas has been blessed in recent years by generous North American dental crews that come annually to assist with dental care. However, the ability to purchase even basic supplies like

toothpaste and toothbrushes is limited by a lack of financial resources and the simple fact that those products are not available in many small communities. Visiting dentists can often do little more than pulling rotten teeth. Count your blessings if you can see a dentist regularly.

#### **Thursday, December 16**

- Having access to affordable health insurance improves one's chances of seeing a doctor for preventative care and sick visits. Even here in North America, many people cannot afford insurance, and this is not an option in many other parts of the world. In Matthew 25:36, Jesus said, "I was sick, and you took care of me." Private health insurance does not exist in Honduras' La Mosquitia. National health insurance is available to some professionals, but only in the larger cities. Most patients seen at the Clínica Evangélica Morava live outside of the cash economy and cannot afford to cover the cost of medical care received. The hospital annually accumulates unpaid patient debts amounting to tens of thousands of dollars. Count your blessings if you have health insurance and access to medical care.

#### **Friday, December 17**

- For most North Americans with transportation, access to a grocery store allows us to easily purchase needed food for our families. This is not the case for many in the developing world. The pandemic made this worse in many countries because supply lines were cut off. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat." In recent years small grocery stores (*truchas*) have opened in Ahuas and other larger communities. For many people, food still comes as it has for generations from family agricultural plots, which, unfortunately, are frequently subject to floods, insects, and other pests. People do not typically have the cash to spend on food, and most of the smaller villages do not have stores that sell groceries. Count your blessings if you have easy access to a grocery store.

#### **Saturday, December 18**

- For those who are poor and living on the margins, natural disasters can have a devastating effect. Hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, fires, and droughts can rob people of what little they have, leaving them vulnerable to sickness or death. The people of La Mosquitia depend on their agricultural plots for food and their hand-dug wells for potable water. Frequent tropical storms and periodic hurricanes bring heavy winds and floods that destroy crops, contaminate wells, and damage homes. Count your blessings if you have not been adversely impacted by a natural disaster this year.

#### **Sunday, December 19 – Fourth Sunday of Advent**

- Video gaming systems can provide hours of entertainment for youth and adults, but they are expensive. They can also isolate us from the world around us if we let them. Count your blessings for each of the game systems you have in your home.

#### **Monday, December 20**

- Most of us in North America have more than enough room in our homes. Most of us have rooms that we do not use consistently. Many people in the world have less than four rooms to count as their home. In Matthew 25:35, Jesus said, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." Count your blessings for every room in your home.

#### **Tuesday, December 21**

- Indoor plumbing is not only a convenience, but it also provides for better public health. Cities and towns with sewer systems have cleaner groundwater and, therefore, better public health. Honduran Moravians rarely have indoor plumbing. Families that can afford the cost of construction will have outhouses or latrines. However, many people still rely on clumps of bushes that communities generally recognize and avoid except for those purposes. Bushes (and even some well-constructed latrines) contribute to problems with drinking water and intestinal parasites. Count your blessings for every bathroom in your home.

### **Wednesday, December 22**

- When a guest comes to your home, welcoming them inside is the hospitable thing to do. Many homes in developing countries lack furniture for them to invite people to sit and relax. In Matthew 25:25, Jesus said, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me." Count your blessings for every chair in your home.

### **Thursday, December 23**

- In a medical emergency, most of us in North America have access to rescue squads with trained Emergency Medical Technicians. The ambulances they use are stocked with valuable life-saving technology such as defibrillators. It can take days for some people in developing countries to make their way to a clinic, therefore, reducing their chance of surviving an emergency medical event. Emergency medicine in smaller, more remote communities is often limited to herbal medicines, midwives, and traditional healers. The Honduran Government has done an admirable job of building health centers in larger villages, but they are often understaffed and poorly supplied. Thankfully, for the past 75 years, the Moravian Church has supported a hospital in Ahuas that can provide emergency medicine in the form of stitches for a machete wound or an emergency C-section in the case of a difficult pregnancy. Count your blessings if you have easy access to emergency medical assistance and transportation.

### **Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve**

- Today, simply look back over the blessings that you have noted during this Advent season. Give thanks for the gift of the Christ Child who came into a world of darkness and filled it with light. How can you bless others with that light in the days, weeks, and months that are ahead of us?

### **What next?**

- As you have journeyed through this Advent season counting your blessings, you should now have a jar full of change or tally cards. Take a moment to count that up. Can you make this donation to the Board of World Mission so that we can share your blessings with the Clinic in Ahuas? Please don't send us your change! US citizens can go to [www.moravian.org/give](http://www.moravian.org/give) and follow the instructions to make a secure online/tax-deductible donation. Canadian citizens may send Interac e-Transfer donations to [treasurer@moravian.ca](mailto:treasurer@moravian.ca).

#### **If you wish to mail your donation by check, please send it to:**

##### **US citizens can mail their donation to:**

Board of World Mission  
1021 Center Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18018

##### **Canadian citizens can send donations to:**

Moravian Church in Canada  
600 Acadia Drive SE  
Calgary, AB T2J 0B8

**Please note: Whether you make your donation online or by mail, please indicate that this donation is part of the Advent Blessing Calendar for the Ahuas Clinic. Thank you!**

## Advent Blessing Calendar Tally Cards



<b>Sunday, November 28</b>	<b>Monday, November 29</b>	<b>Tuesday, November 1</b>	<b>Wednesday, December 1</b>	<b>Thursday, December 2</b>
Roof over your head: _____	Meals shared in your home today: _____	Number of Beds in your home: _____	Pairs of Shoes in your home: _____	Number of vehicles you own: _____
<b>Friday, December 3</b>	<b>Saturday, December 4</b>	<b>Sunday, December 5</b>	<b>Monday, December 6</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 7</b>
Cans of food in your kitchen: _____	Number of kitchen appliances: _____	Children have access to schools: _____	Number of coats in your home: _____	Number of faucets in your home: _____
<b>Wednesday, December 8</b>	<b>Thursday, December 9</b>	<b>Friday, December 10</b>	<b>Saturday, December 11</b>	<b>Sunday, December 12</b>
Number of light bulbs in your home: _____	Number of Doctors seen in the past year: _____	Number of credit cards: _____	Number of lawn power tools: _____	Number of TVs in your home: _____
<b>Monday, December 13</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 14</b>	<b>Wednesday, December 15</b>	<b>Thursday, December 16</b>	<b>Friday, December 17</b>
Number of cell phones: _____	Number of computers: _____	Access to a Dentist: _____	Do you have health insurance? _____	Do you have access to a grocery store: _____
<b>Saturday, December 18</b>	<b>Sunday, December 19</b>	<b>Monday December 20</b>	<b>Tuesday, December 21</b>	<b>Wednesday, December 22</b>
Not been impacted by a natural disaster: _____	Number of game systems in your home: _____	Number of rooms in your home: _____	Number of bathrooms in your home: _____	Number chairs in your home: _____
<b>Thursday, December 23</b>	<b>Friday, December 24</b>			
Access to medical emergency transportation and care _____	Count up all of your blessings for the month _____			