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Opportunities through empty tomb®, inc.

Vol. 55, No. 4 | A Two-Month Report of the Works through empty tomb®, inc. | August-September 2026

You Are Very Important

You are not here by accident.

Sure, that's a faith statement.

But being a Christian brings one to that realization.

To become a Christian is to step into God's big plan.

Throughout history, regular people began relating to God through Jesus. And when they did, they stepped into a plan that was bigger than they were.

The fishermen were ... fishermen. Not world changers. Not "important people." When the religious leaders "saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

By his account, Saul was "the worst of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:16) and came to understand God's grace, becoming the apostle Paul and writing a good chunk of the New Testament.

Frances of Assisi walked away from his rich earthly father and walked into a church renewal movement.

Of course you know others.

Each one stepped into God's bigger plan.

We're not John Wesley or Martin Luther or Mother Teresa or Billy Graham. God already has one of each of those. (Sylvia has a funny story about how she learned that God already had a Mother Teresa, thank you, and she should be "Sylvia" instead; perhaps she'll share it sometime.)

We're not any of those people. Instead, generations and generations of people met, birthed, and died, leading up to ... you.

Now here you are. And here we are.

And we are at this point of eternity in God's plan.

Our current situation is unique.

Probably every past time has had its own uniqueness.

What's important is that we figure out what's unique about this one.

And how it fits in God's bigger plan.

Because God's plan is built on you and us and each one doing our part if God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

When Jesus walked the earth, the order of the day was one-to-one miracles: "... and he healed all their sick" (Matt. 12:15).

The apostles were given the gift of healing, too. For example, Peter and John and the man who could not walk at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 3:7-8), the apostles healed many (Acts 5:15-16), and even handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul were taken to sick people who were healed (Acts 19:11-12).

That was then. Today, a shift has occurred. The earmark of the church is not usually spontaneous one-on-one miracles, although reports of those indicate they still happen.

Now, we live in a time ripe with the possibility of intentional miracles.

And it is no accident that you are alive right here, right now.

You have a role to play in God's bigger plan built on this point in eternity.

What the individual apostles did to heal people can now be done if we work together.

We've seen it in the local works. Read the Body of Christ in Action on page 2, and see how people are fed, and provided beds and clothes, because we work through our churches together.

Together, as reported on page 4, we were able to share 106 backpacks with area children for the new school year.

And page 3 shows both young people and others reaching out in word and deed in Jesus' name.

We have commented more than once to each other that you are true heroes, too, sharing the donations that allow these works to happen. Thank you.

Still, there are even more possibilities. God has us alive at a special time in history. And we have to decide what we're going to do about it.

We've all heard the phrase a "miracle of medicine." And it's true that medicine is now able to do amazing things that could not have happened before.

Yes, we live in an age where miracles can now happen through intentional action.

We can choose to do our part to help God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We can use our church delivery channels to reach areas where children are dying from treatable causes. We can choose to use more of our resources — which are at a high point in recorded history — to provide, in Jesus' name, miracles of medicine to those, particularly children under five in 40 countries, who will die without them.

When we talk about empty tomb's Mission Match (see page 2), that's what we picture.

Mission Match is not a "program." It's Christians working together to do what they say they believe, and having some fun along the way.

Because being the person God designed you to be is fun in a way that nothing else can be.

You are very important. For lots of reasons. And one reason is that God's plan will not be quite complete unless you step into it and fill the spot designed for you, and that only you can fill.

It's no accident you are here at this point in eternity. It's taken generations to get you here.

And while we're here together today, we can show people what it means that we say we are Christians, and do it in a way like nobody has before us.

Because this is our time in eternity. And you are important in order for all of us to make the most of it.

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Join the empty tomb Mission Match® Adventure!

In the past few months, we've had a chance to talk with a few congregations about the works of empty tomb. We talk about the wonderful works going on locally.

But like C.S. Lewis wrote in *The Horse and His Boy*, "He had not yet learned that if you do one good deed, your reward usually is to be set to do another and harder and better one."

In addition to the many people locally who need help, there are mothers in 40 countries watching their children die from lack of simple treatments. In this case, "better" means Bigger. And yes, we're asking you to help!

These 40 countries have had difficulty reducing the rate of under-age five child deaths. These countries are often the most difficult to reach. But do you know, as we did research for our church talks, we found examples of Christians there, Christians who need our help to keep helping the mothers and children. There are many other projects, of course, in addition to these examples.

So we tell you, the adventure is not over!

You've cared about local people in need and made help available in Jesus' name. Thank you!

Now we ask you to also join us on the further adventure of starting a movement of churches to increase help to these mothers and children.

In empty tomb's Mission Match, we have enough money donated for 30 matching contributions. We need applications from churches that want to do medical clinic projects in any one of the 40 countries. How can you help us receive those 30 applications?

Here are some suggestions. Let's get going!

Start Here or Wherever You Choose!

Buckeye Clinic in South Sudan



You can tell your Methodist friends their denomination is supporting a clinic in a South Sudan refugee camp. Although the child death rate in the country as a whole is about 10%, of about 8,100 children under age five treated at the clinic in 2024, there were no reported deaths.



And you can point out to your Catholic friends that if their parish doesn't already have a relationship with a health clinic in one of the 40 countries, Catholic Medical Missions has a Children and Mothers Partnership Program active in some of the 40 countries.



And talk to your Southern Baptist friends about the Medical Teams that are sent to countries like Sudan, where they've helped with 4,829 safe baby deliveries and 1.8+ million malnutrition screenings.

And you can tell your Lutheran friends that, if they don't know projects their denomination is doing, a Lutheran group called Global Health Ministries works in some of the 40 countries, including Central African Republic.

Central African Republic

Key Measures	CAR	U.S.
Maternal Mortality *Deaths/100,000 live births*	835	21
Infant Mortality *Deaths/1,000 live births*	97	6
Nurses/Midwives *Number/1,000 people*	0.2	12.5



And you can talk to a local Illinois church that has applied four times for Mission Match matching contributions over five years, first to help build a mother-child clinic in Ghana and now to help fund the training and support of midwives there.

More Info: missionmatch.org

Who does your church know, working at a medical clinic, in one of these 40 countries?

NATION		
Africa: 32 Nations		
	1	Angola
	2	Benin
	3	Burkina Faso
	4	Burundi
	5	Cameroon
	6	Central African Republic
	7	Chad
	8	Comoros
	9	Côte d'Ivoire
	10	Democratic Republic of the Congo
	11	Djibouti
	12	Equatorial Guinea
	13	Gabon
	14	Gambia
	15	Ghana
	16	Guinea
	17	Guinea-Bissau
	18	Lesotho
	19	Liberia
	20	Mali
	21	Mauritania
	22	Mozambique
	23	Niger
	24	Nigeria
	25	Sierra Leone
	26	Somalia
	27	South Sudan
	28	Sudan
	29	Swaziland
	30	Togo
	31	Zambia
	32	Zimbabwe
Asia: 6 Nations		
	33	Afghanistan
	34	India
	35	Lao People's Democratic Republic
	36	Myanmar
	37	Pakistan
	38	Turkmenistan
Latin America/Caribbean: 1 Nation		
	39	Haiti
Oceania: 1 Nation		
	40	Papua New Guinea

?

And you can find out what connections your own congregation has to a medical clinic in one of the 40 countries, a clinic that includes treatment of children under age five. Your church can apply for up to $3,000 to match your church's offering for the project. And then your church sends all the money directly to the project. Let's work together to help the children and mothers in Jesus' name!

The Body of Christ in Action

We thank God for the many caring Christian individuals who volunteer at empty tomb. Following are Christian groups and churches that individual and group volunteers represent through the works at empty tomb June 1 – July 31, 2026. Thanks to all.

Clothing Work: Catholic Heart Workcamp; CU Church, C.; First Church of God, C.; First United Methodist Church, C.; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, C.; Grace Lutheran Church, C.; Mattis Ave. Free Methodist Church, C.; New Life Church of Faith, U.; and St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Gifford.

Food Work: Catholic Heart Workcamp; Apostolic Christian Church, C.; The Church of the Living God, C.; Copper Creek Church, C.; Dublin Street Church of Christ, U.; Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church, C.; Faith Community Church, U.; Faith United Methodist Church, C.; First Baptist Church of Champaign at Savoy; First Mennonite Church, U.; First United Methodist Church, C.; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, C.; Grace Lutheran Church, C.; Immanuel Lutheran Church, Flatville; Liberty Temple Church of God in Christ, C.; Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church, C.; Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, C.; St. Matthew Lutheran Church, U.; Salem Baptist Church, C.; Trinity Lutheran Church, U.; and, Wesley United Methodist Church, U.

Furniture Work: Catholic Heart Workcamp; Chinese Christian Church, C.; Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church, C.; Faith United Methodist Church, C.; First United Methodist Church, C.; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, C.; Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church, C.; Sangamon Valley Church, Mahomet; St. John's Catholic Church, C.; St. Patrick Catholic Church, U.; St. Philomena Catholic Church, Monticello; Trinity Lutheran Church, U.; and, Twin City Bible Church, U.

Office/Other: Apostolic Christian Church, C.; Catholic Heart Workcamp; Christian Bible Church, Cissna Park; The Church of the Living God, C.; CU Church, C.; Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church, C.; First Presbyterian Church, C.; First Presbyterian Church, U.; First United Methodist Church, C.; Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, C.; Grace Lutheran Church, C.; Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church, C.; St. Patrick Catholic Church, U.; and, Stratford Park Bible Chapel, C.

Please contact Sylvia Ronsvalle, Exec VP, at info@emptytomb.org if we neglected to include your church or student group who made a group effort to assist others in Jesus' name through empty tomb, inc. We will plan both to thank you and include you in the next issue!

The empty tomb Opportunities Newsletter is published bimonthly to report on the opportunities developed by empty tomb®, inc. for service to others through Christ's Body, the Church.

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A Summer of Youth!

This summer, we had the pleasure of hosting several different young people. They were all energetic and their help made a big difference!



Left to right: Bob Clark (Volunteer Supervisor (VS), Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (GSLC), C.), John Doll (VS, First United Methodist Church (FUMC), C.), Ella Smith, Patty Hart (VS, GSLC, C.), Gabe Creek, Zachary Buertlein, Cheyenne Fry, Karly Harding, Patty Frana (Catholic Heart Workcamp Supervisor), and Sue Bachman (VS, FUMC, C.)

In June, it was once again our pleasure to host a team from Catholic Heart Workcamp. The five young people and their supervisor came from several states showing a real desire to serve others in Jesus' name. They went out on Furniture Pickup/Delivery and sang Happy Birthday to a young member of a household receiving a bed, did Food Deliveries, helped clear brush, and planted the flowers! You see the new flower boxes before their visit, upper left, and the blooming results by mid-July.



Left to right: Victor Isaiah "Zay" Schiro, Anna Hernandez, Gabriel Helenie, Mateo Hernandez, Maxwell Hester, Sophie Anderson, NextGen Pastor Shawn Delacourt, Ruby Anderson, Phoebe Anderson

Mattis Ave. Free Methodist Church, C., youth were active at empty tomb this summer. Above, the Youth Group came for three days in early August. They went on Furniture Pickup/Delivery, a Food Delivery, helped to sort clothes, and pulled a lot of weeds!

Below, Mattis Avenue Free Methodist Church also does a Furniture Pickup/Delivery run regularly once a month. In July, Emma Starbird joined her father Jason (center) and Jim Cowley on a rainy Saturday. We appreciate each of these young people and the service they shared in word and deed in Jesus' name!



Jeremy Huang (left) and Max Li have both literally grown up doing the Furniture Work. For several years, they've been regulars on the Chinese Christian Church, C., and Twin City Bible Church, U., once-a-month runs.

Now Jeremy is heading to Chicago to attend Moody Bible Institute to study counseling, and Max is returning to Calvin University, Grand Rapids, MI, for his sophomore year, studying physical therapy. We wish them well and hope to see them next summer!





St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Tolono, Generosity

Recently, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Tolono, found they had extra food in their Food Pantry. They generously drove up to Champaign and shared it with empty tomb. Here, empty tomb Clothing Staff Person Angie Cooper prepares to put the food out on the shelves. It was quickly gone and greatly appreciated. We are grateful for St. Patrick's generosity!

A Tenth Anniversary!



John Fossett is a faithful volunteer. He attends Stratford Park Bible Chapel, C. He helps us regularly with shredding documents. When he was here recently, John pointed out that he has been volunteering for 10 years! That's quite a run, and we appreciate John very much!

Statistics for June 1—July 31, 2026

Christian Health Services	
New cribs shared	10
Layettes shared	12
Number who received Medical Fund Assistance	17
Medical Fund Assistance	$5,905
# children for whom parents received diapers	62

Clothing	
Visitors to the Clothing Room (including onetime, occasional, and regular visitors)	2,209
Bags/boxes sorted, estimated	2,236
Volunteer hours	222
Free Food	
Deliveries coordinated through empty tomb	92
Number of people in households receiving deliveries	280
Number of times 1-pound bag of beans shared	21
Number of times bags (make 3 qts) of powdered milk shared	71

Furniture	
Items delivered	113
Items shared through Display Room	10
Volunteer hours	147
Helping	
Times assistance given	81
Helping Fund shared	$12,735
Number of Seniors helped through Senior Fund	6
Senior Fund shared	$2,100
Office and Other Volunteer hours	433
Total Volunteer hours	802

The following information is shared by empty tomb, inc., with our friends outside of Illinois, as we have been advised to do.
UNIFORM DISCLOSURE STATEMENT: empty tomb, inc. ("empty tomb") is a §501(c)(3) organization, gifts to which are deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes.
California: empty tomb's audited financial statement is available upon request to empty tomb. 100 percent of your gift may be deducted under Federal and State income tax laws. Florida: A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE WITHIN THE STATE, 1-800-435-7352, OR AT WWW.800HELPFLA.COM. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE. empty tomb's registration number is CH30798. Georgia: Upon request, empty tomb will provide a full and fair description of this and its other programs, and a financial statement or summary. Maryland: A copy of empty tomb's current financial statement is available on request to empty tomb, inc., P.O. Box 2404, Champaign, Illinois 61825-2404; (217) 356-9519. For the cost of copies and postage, registration documents, and other information are available from the Maryland Secretary of State. Minnesota: 100 percent of your gift may be deducted as a charitable contribution under Federal and state income tax laws. Mississippi: The official registration and financial information of empty tomb may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 1-888-236-6167. Registration by the Secretary of State does not imply endorsement. Virginia: A financial statement is available from the State Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services upon request. Washington: The registration statement required by the Charitable Solicitation Act is on file with the Secretary of State. Additional information can be obtained by calling 1-800-332-4483. West Virginia: West Virginia residents may obtain a summary of the registration and financial documents from the Secretary of State, State Capitol, Charleston, West Virginia 24305. Registration does not imply endorsement.



106 Backpacks!

Patricia Brown, Karen Roberson, (both of Church of the Living God, C.), and Moira Dukes (New Life Church of Faith, U.) signed up children for backpacks the first day.

Karen's daughter, Kim Roberson Patterson, designed the fun 8.5"x11" handout you see at the far right. Much appreciated!

A wrapped Adventure Bible was included in each backpack, with the message, "Jesus loves you! We're praying for your success in school this year."

Sue Bachman, Lynne Lyman, and Sharon Johnson brought 50





filled backpacks donated by the folks at First United Methodist Church, C.

With other donated backpacks, a total of 106 backpacks were shared this year. In addition, four boxes of supplies, each with a wrapped Adventure Bible, and a mini-backpack for a three-year old preschooler were also shared.

Join us in praying for all these children and their success in school this year!



Volunteer Opportunities

If you are an active participant in a local historically Christian church and are looking for a way to put into practice what you learn on Sunday, think empty tomb!

• Receptionist: Once a week, answer phones. This is a real ministry opportunity to help people make the connections they need.

• Clothing Work: Help sort clothes. Times available are Monday through Friday, morning and afternoons, and Saturday mornings.

• Food Work: Does your church already do deliveries? Sign up to be in the rotation. If your church doesn't do deliveries, find out how to organize your church to reach out in this way.

• Furniture Work: Does your church already have a team? Join in the pickup and delivery of items needed by local people. If not, organize a crew to help out!

For more information, send an email to info@emptytomb.org.

Employment Opportunity

If you are an active participant in a local historically Christian church and have a flexible schedule, you might be interested in being a substitute in the Clothing Room.

We have a great core team. However, sometimes they are not able to cover a weekday afternoon or Saturday morning.

See emptytomb.org/employment-opportunities/ for more info.

"May the Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."
— 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Christmas Is Coming!

We hope to be able to sign up 100 families to select toys for children 0-12 years of age.

Each parent/guardian also will be invited to select a family basket with a variety of small gifts for the older children and the parent(s)/guardian.

If you or your church would like to provide a family basket, please contact us. We are trying to have 100 such baskets so each family can choose one from the display of available baskets.

If you are interested, or need more information, please email info@emptytomb.org, Subject: Christmas baskets. Your questions are welcome!





Thanksgiving Baskets

We are thankful that churches want to provide Thanksgiving food baskets to families referred by agencies to empty tomb.

If your church would like to deliver one or more baskets to a family for Thanksgiving, please contact empty tomb by October 24, 2026.

We need to know that early so we can tell the agencies how many names we can accept.

If you have questions, please email info@emptytomb.org, Subject: Thanksgiving.

This is one more way to share Jesus' love in word and deed!

General Fund Status through the July 31, 2026, Payment Cycle

Undesignated donations available after paying July 16-31, 2026, bills, food and helping assistance, set-asides, and salaries -$2,538.44

❒ A positive amount indicates that more than enough was available to cover the payment cycle amount needed and this positive balance will be applied to the next payment cycle.

☑ A negative amount reflects the amount that was needed from the Running Start Fund to fully cover the July 16-31, 2026, payment cycle.*

No-Late Bills Reserve Fund Status (NLBRF) Status as of July 31, 2026, after the July 16-31, 2026, payment cycle

Amount Below the No-Late-Bills Reserve Fund Goal Amount** $0.00

Funds were available to meet January 1 – July 31, 2026, salary obligations on time 14 times out of a possible 14 times this calendar year 2026.

Funds were available to meet January 1 – July 31, 2025, salary obligations on time 14 times out of a possible 14 times last calendar year 2025.

*The Running Start Fund balance of $10,000 was set aside from a January 2026 for "one month ahead" in 2026. The Running Start Fund balance was $614.07 as of the July 16-31, 2026, payment cycle.

** Since the NLBRF goal amount of $80,000 was reached at least once in 2026, the NLBRF is available as needed to even out cashflow in 2026.

NOTE: The NLBRF can grow throughout the year as a result of designated donations and interest earned, both of which could, in theory, bring the balance above the goal amount. The NLBRF can also grow from end-of-year undesignated donations, up to the goal amount. If deemed appropriate, in addition to funding current operating expenses, undesignated donations can also be internally transferred to the NLBRF, up to the goal amount.

Christine Horger, Bookkeeper — Joy H. Bonczek, Assistant Treasurer

Thank you for helping to make the Works of *empty tomb, inc.* possible.