

November 2025

Called to Cambodia

Stories of the adventures of Jeff Henneforth as he responds to God's call to live among, serve, and love the people of Cambodia.



Poipet Youth Ministry

Since our first ever youth retreat back in February, the youth ministry has been exploding. All year long, every Friday night, kids between the ages of 10 to 18 have been coming to our youth service. Most of the kids come from a place called K'baal Spien, which is one of the poorest parts of Poipet. Many live in houses made of wooden slats and tar paper or corrugated metal. Many of these houses are up on stilts to keep them above flood level during the rainy season. A lot of these kids attend the Mercy Ministries Foundation school, which is a Christian school in the slums. And a few of their teachers join us at the Friday night youth meeting. Our youth night begins with some worship songs, then the kids play a group game together, followed by a Bible study, and finally the evening is finished off with a dinner that we are able to provide. This dinner may be the best food these kids get all week. And over the last couple of months we are seeing the youth night grow. We've been preparing enough food for 90 kids, but lately we've been running out and having to get extra food. I don't know of anything else like this that is available for kids their age in the area. We are so thankful to see the Lord blessing this ministry. And we are thankful for all of you who are praying for us and providing support.



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Youth Night Pictures



Planning in Faith

As I mentioned before, our first Youth Retreat was back in February. Not only did the kids love it, we also learned a lot from the experience. We planned the youth retreat knowing that a team was coming to help. That team provided the funds needed for the retreat, taught the morning messages during the retreat, and also helped with crafts and played with the kids during the free time. They also helped chaperone at trip to Angkor Wat and even provided medical care to a girl who cut her foot badly. Before the retreat, we here in Cambodia were hopeful but wondering how it would go because we had never done anything like that before. The closest thing we had done before this was to take a much smaller group from the Happy Home to a week-long camping trip at the beach a few years ago. Then at the beginning of this year, we were planning to take kids from other families who would be away from their loved ones for several days - something we had not done before. We did not know how that would go. For most of the kids, it was their first time staying in a hotel, and we did not know how they would do in that situation. The results were absolutely positive. During the trip, I met an older couple from Canada who were staying at the same hotel. At the end of breakfast, they called me over to their table and asked if I was working with all the Cambodian kids they had just seen at the hotel buffet. I told them yes and explained where we brought the kids from. I was concerned that they might have been frustrated with the kids. But they told me that they thought the kids were super well behaved and wanted to let the leaders know how impressed they were with the kids. I can't take any credit for that – that credit goes to their teachers at the school and the Cambodian leaders at the retreat who were working with them. At the end of the trip, the hotel staff also invited us to bring the kids back again in the future, which tells me that the hotel was happy with the way everything went.



One of the things we were watching for during that retreat was to see how everything went and evaluate if this was something we could do again – on our own if necessary. And after seeing how well things went, we have decided that yes, this is something we think we can do. And in all likelihood would like to start doing every year. And so we have begun planning another youth retreat taking the kids back to Siem Reap for a week in February 2026.

One thing we learned is that we can probably handle bringing a few more kids. And so this time, we are making the group size slightly larger even though we expect to have the same number of Cambodian leaders with us. Dara, who was my original translator but is now a pastor, and his wife are going to help us once again. And this year, we are giving several spots for Dara to bring some of the youth from his church, which will help them too. Another thing we saw is that we can gain a full day by leaving slightly sooner. For the retreat that happened earlier this year, we had a bus pick us up on Monday morning to drive the kids to the retreat. This coming year, we want to move that to Sunday afternoon, which will give us a full day on Monday to do more with the kids – more Bible study, more worship, more activities.

We are excited and looking forward to taking these kids back to Siem Reap to spend time with them showering them with God's love. But we can really use some help in a few different ways.

Opportunity for You

The retreat we had earlier this year was planned because we had a team come. The team was able to help us in significant ways. While we think we know enough to be able to do this upcoming retreat on our own, it would be great to have some additional help in the form of feet on the ground. And so, we want to offer the opportunity those who might be interested in coming to help us with the youth retreat. While no official team coming, it would be super cool to have a few adventurous people who love kids and love the Lord come help us out for a week. This would look slightly different than having an organized group. In an organized group, all the travel arrangements would be made by the team and coordinated with us here in Cambodia. Without having that formal organization outside of Cambodia, it will look slightly different. Those coming would have to make their own travel arrangements, including airfare, hotels, and meals. I would be able to make some recommendations for accommodations in Poipet and Siem Reap. I would also be able to help you arrange transportation from the airport to Poipet. We will handle your transportation during the time you are with us in Poipet and Siem Reap. A friend of mine in the States who has literally millions of miles of travel experience has made himself available to assist anyone who would be interested in coming to help.



Anyone joining us would get to experience the underwhelming lack of luxury that is Poipet. But you would get to see where the kids we are spending time with live. You would get to experience the culture and friendliness of the Cambodian people. You will get to spend a lot of time with these kids getting to know them, playing games with them, helping them with English, swimming in the pool with them, helping us take them to Angkor Wat – one of the world’s most amazing ancient heritage sites, and overall showing these precious kids God’s love and making a huge difference in their lives. The youth retreat is planned for Sunday, February 15 through Friday, February 20, 2026, so ideally you would arrive in Cambodia on Thursday or Friday February 12 or 13 to spend the weekend with us in Poipet, and then stay until Friday the 20th – the bus back to Poipet will leave Friday morning. Basically, you would be joining us for a week. You could potentially come for longer to visit other locations like Phnom Penh or take a trip into Thailand to visit Bangkok or other interesting places, but you would be on your own for that.



In order to join us, I would first need you to contact me via email. Let me know that you’re interested and we can discuss additional details. While I’m not expecting a huge response, I want to make sure we don’t have too many people either as that could lead to other challenges. We are only looking for a small number of people to join us. If it is something that intrigues you though, please pray about it and then let me know.

If You Want to Help Financially

Even if you can't join us in person, we still really need help in another way. We are looking for some out of the ordinary financial support. First, we are estimating that the trip will run about \$10,000 for all the expenses, including transportation, five nights of lodging, food for a week, and activities. Approximately 50 people including our Cambodian leaders will attend the youth retreat. If this is something you are willing to help us with, it would be great if you can send me a message. However, you are always welcome to give anonymously through the church, just let them know the donation is for the youth retreat in Cambodia. Donations in any amount are appreciated. Donation information is provided at the end of this newsletter.

There is one other thing we can use some help with that has to do with the church. When we started the church 13 years ago, someone donated a couple of used speakers. Those speakers have served us well over the years, but they are finally beginning to show their age and we are having more and more sound issues with them. We are looking to replace them with two new speakers, which are going to run \$1000 apiece.

I don't usually share a lot of special requests for funds. The Lord has always been so faithful to provide. But I realize that if I don't share the opportunities to give when there is a need, I could also be withholding from you a chance to bless others. Please, don't feel any pressure to give – only if you feel like the Lord would want you to. Remember, the Lord loves a cheerful giver. I love you and am thankful for you regardless.



Thanksgiving as a Missionary

With Thanksgiving coming soon, I thought you might be interested in hearing how a missionary spends that holiday in Cambodia. Cambodia is a country with many holidays. In 2026, there will be 21 paid days off for holidays, which is down from 28 days. This is a lot, but keep in mind that many people work six or even seven days each week, and many people will work through these holiday, especially those who own small businesses. However, Thanksgiving is not one of those holidays.

As a missionary, I don't get to experience all of the holidays we have back in the US. And most of the Cambodian holidays are not holidays for me. I don't have any connection with things like the water festival or Pchum Benh where dead ancestors are given offerings. I will sometimes go out and throw water with the kids during Khmer New Year in April. With all of those holidays, it should be noted that most American holidays are not celebrated here. And Thanksgiving is one of those holidays that is most noticeably absent. A few times I've been able to do some different things for Thanksgiving. Once, I was invited to join a number of other missionaries in another province for a pot luck style Thanksgiving. And that was a blast. A few other times I have been invited to join the local YWAM group and have had a Thanksgiving meal with them. This year, it looks like I'll be on my own. And that's OK too. I'm not an extrovert. I don't feel energized by being a part of large group. But I don't consider myself an introvert either. I like being around other people. But I'm happy being on my own too. I guess I'm a little of both, which is not a bad thing to be as a missionary, because we frequently are alone.

When I think of Thanksgiving, I not only think of the people I would be with, but I also think of the food. Growing up, we always had turkey. But there is no turkey in Cambodia. Some people can order it from a special meat import company down in Phnom Penh. But that's far away, expensive, and doesn't make sense for someone on his own. But there is plenty of chicken here. So I'll probably do that. I've become really good at making homemade hot wings in my air fryer. We also had other things like stuffing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, bean casserole, and of course, pumpkin pie when I was growing up. I haven't seen stuffing here in Poipet, and I wouldn't know how to make it anyway. We have potatoes, so I could mash them. But I have learned how to use a food processor to make a Cauliflower mash that I actually like even more than mashed potatoes, and we can get Cauliflower here – so I think I will do that too. There are also plenty of sweet potatoes at the market, and I'll be picking up some of those. The local convenience store sells some canned creamed corn from China that will be a good substitute for some of the other Thanksgiving sides. That leaves the only thing to figure out – the pie. I've never seen pie in Poipet before. And I'm not sure it's something I can make. But some of the stores have been selling these little mochi ball treats. That might be the closest thing to pie here. That might be the answer.

Whatever the case, I'm thankful. I'm thankful that the Lord has brought me here. I'm thankful for all the kids and the families that are coming. And I'm thankful for all of you.

ps. A few days after writing this, but shortly before sending to you I received an invitation to have Thanksgiving dinner with the YWAM folks again. So I'm not on my own this year after all. Happy Thanksgiving!

Prayer Requests

- Pray that the Lord would use us in the lives of these kids – that they would become rooted and grounded in a life-long faith.
- Pray that the Lord would guide us as we plan and prepare for the youth retreat in February.
- The Lord has been so faithful to guide me in teaching the Bible – please pray that He would continue to fill me with His Holy Spirit and use me to effectively teach the Word and share the Good News.
- Pray that our church will continue to grow and reach the people around us for Jesus.
- Please continue to pray for the videos Chean and I are working on and that they would be a blessing and a help to those here in Cambodia who have questions. We are now up to 150 videos!
- Pray for peace between Cambodia and Thailand. The border has been closed for over 6 months and we are not sure when it will open again. While a peace agreement has been signed, tensions are still high and there has even been some cross border shooting in the last couple of week only about 30 kilometers away from Poipet.

Financial Support: [donations are tax deductible]

Missionary financial support for Jeff can be made as a one-time contribution or as monthly support.

Please make checks payable to: Calvary Chapel Pacific Hills with “Cambodia-Henneforth” in the memo.

Mail to: Calvary Chapel Pacific Hills, 24481 Moulton Parkway, Aliso Viejo, CA 92637

Support can be given online at www.ccpacifichills.org (Fund = Missions, Sub Fund = Jeff Henneforth)

If you have any questions about making a donation, please call (949) 362-7475