



# The Shields

Family

Church Planters in Aruba

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Happy New Year! I pray that each of you had a wonderful Christ filled CHRISTmas time and a wonderful end to 2024. It is wild to think that we are in the second week of 2025; time flies by so fast! Just last week the owner of the radio station where we broadcast was found dead in his bed; of course this was a huge surprise to everyone as he seemed so healthy and well. It was a grim reminder that living tomorrow is not a sure thing, and that is why living for Christ TODAY matters the most! I hope that each of you not only know the Lord as Saviour, but that you also are living with His Kingdom and will as your #1 priority.

Here in Aruba our end of the year was saturated with extra activities and church events. Everything from our Thanksgiving dinner in November all the way through our New Year's Eve Service we tried to use each activity to preach the Gospel and shine the spotlight on Christ! We went Christmas caroling house to house, gave them a gift basket from the Church, and prayed with each family before we left. We were allowed to sing at the Hospital for about three hours, and at a decorated park we were able to sing to at least about 1,000 people walking through. Each of the three churches had a special Christmas service, and then we welcomed 2025 at the mission on the south side of the island with a sweet group of brethren where we stayed up till about 6 a.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan!

Since our last report we have seen several people saved, new attendees in both our main Church and the mission on the south side of the island, plenty of first-time visitors, and spiritual growth in our church families. Probably one of the most exciting things for myself as a church planter is that in the last two weeks we had 18 of our men/young men preach in different services! Praise the Lord for the growth that we are seeing in some of our men! Whether they preach again or not, they are willing to do so, and some of them show the Lord's hand upon them with much promise to the future! The Lord has blessed us with a growing group of men and ladies (young and old) who are playing instruments, singing specials, teaching kids classes, helping cover the visitation of our older members, go door-knocking, leading congregational singing, doing bus routes, and a variety of other ministries! Not everyone is working, but many are, and we pray that that spirit will catch on to many more! Praise the Lord that Phil. 1:6 is still in the Bible!

Many have asked me about the new property. So far we have fenced it in with pallets, planted trees on the south end where the parsonage will one day go, and worked on leveling the ground. Berea purchased a 40-foot container to store tools and material in, and we built a 40 x 12 foot shade off of it for meetings and work space. The government regulations state that we have to have a registered road in good condition

NOV - DEC, 2024

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...before we can be granted a building permit. The road can be gravel, but it does have to have a retaining wall on the top side and a concrete drain off ditch all the way to the main road. So, we have found a Christian construction company that is willing to help us put a road in, and we have spoken to the owner of the Subway (our neighbor to the immediate north, and to the other neighbor to the East and are hoping to get everyone together to make the road that touches all our properties. Our neighbors "might" be willing to help pay for part of the work and materials, but it has been made very clear by the government that we will not get our permit if this road is not done first. Please help us pray for this stage of the project and if anyone wants to jump on and help with the cost of the road reach out to me, and I will fill you in with more details. I have not been given the full cost quote, but it seems to be a project that is going to be upwards of \$20K. As soon as the road is done, we can jump into the permits and building plans. If anyone knows of a good Christian architect that would be willing to help us make our building plans, we are in need of one. Here it is extremely expensive, and we have now found a local architect that is willing to sign off on and adjust foreign blueprints so that they can be up to Aruba specs. If we can find a willing architect, then I am willing to either fly him out here or go to him myself with the project so that we can meet face to face. Our church people have started selling food and making special activities on the side to start raising money for the construction; of course we are saving as a Church also. Last Sunday, the 5<sup>th</sup>, we had our first Sunday service of the year on the grounds, with the idea and faith that when this year 2025 ends we will have our last service of the year in our own building here on our property! Although we had many people still traveling from the holidays, others working, and most of our elderly absent (because it was a rainy weekend), we still had over 120 people present from our three churches and we had a wonderful service! There was preaching, fellowship with testimonies and special songs, and a lot of great food (*one of our men donated a goat*), and then we ended the day with soccer and volleyball. Exciting times and blessed memories made!

In our last letter we mentioned the need of some changes with our vehicles; both the church van and our personal vehicles are quite old and beat up. A month or so later a dear friend to our ministry felt led to help us purchase a reliable vehicle for the family. We started looking for something not too old, 6 or more seats, and within the price range offered. Praise the Lord we are now owners of a 2015 Navigator SUV that has a lot of life left in it! I will never cease to be amazed at the wonderful way in which the Lord provides our needs and even goes above and beyond our expected results!

Caleb, our oldest son, was able to come home for his Christmas break this year. We enjoyed having all the kids together again. Every time it happens, we are reminded that it might be the last time, so we try to enjoy it to the max! Caleb is back in Florida for another semester, Tirsia is here in Aruba working a job until this summer, Selah is working a job for a little longer and is getting ready to move to the USA for her first semester of college, and the younger five are each following through with their normal school schedule odd jobs as they can. Enoch is now 16, Judah 14, Mercy 12, Yosef 9, and Belen will be 6 in March. Naomi and I are well, there are health areas in which we are starting to feel our age, but we are daily reminded of the Lord's grace and mercy as we serve Him where He has placed us.

Please pray for us as we continue to serve the Lord here in Aruba. There are many plans for 2025 and we truly desire to see God's perfect will for our lives and this ministry. Some of our larger activities on the calendar are: our **8<sup>th</sup> Missions Conference** with missionary Stephen Minion to Brazil (Jan, 17-19); **Marriage Love Banquet** (14, Feb); **preaching trip to Mexico** (02-17, April); **10<sup>th</sup> Church Anniversary Conference** (June); **Missions trip to Colombia** with missionary Ryan Goodall (July); plus many groups and individuals visiting us here in Aruba. Our **Radio ministry** and **Bible Institute** are going strong and showing positive results as we are seeing people grow nearer to the Lord and His WORD.

Again, thank you for your faithful prayers and support towards our ministry. I don't take it lightly that you would invest your mission's effort in to our ministry; it is an honor to represent your church on the field of Aruba, and it is our desire to see much fruit brought to your account! May the Lord continue to use you, and don't forget that we would love to have you visit us and see what is happening in our corner of the world!

*The Shields Family*

*Romans 14:8*

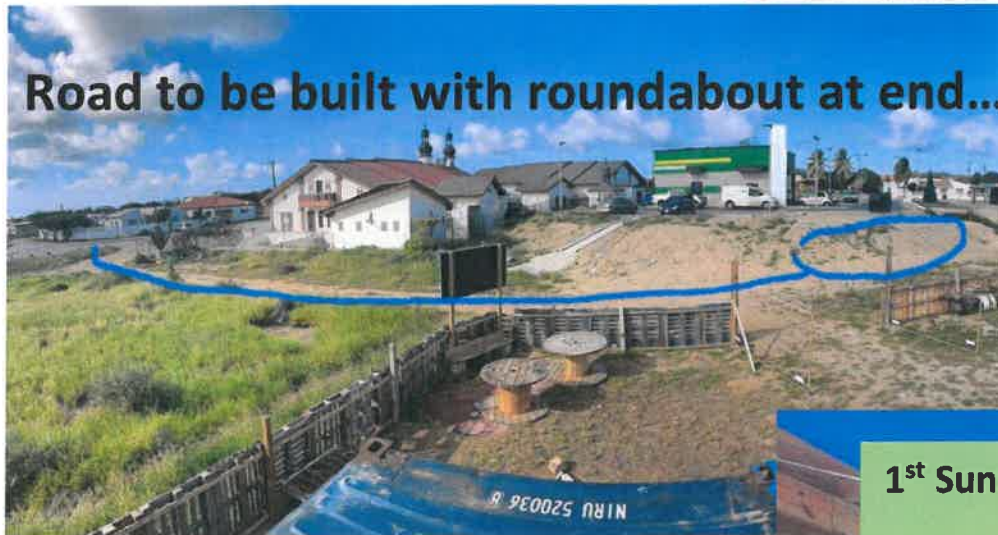
One of the Christmas plays



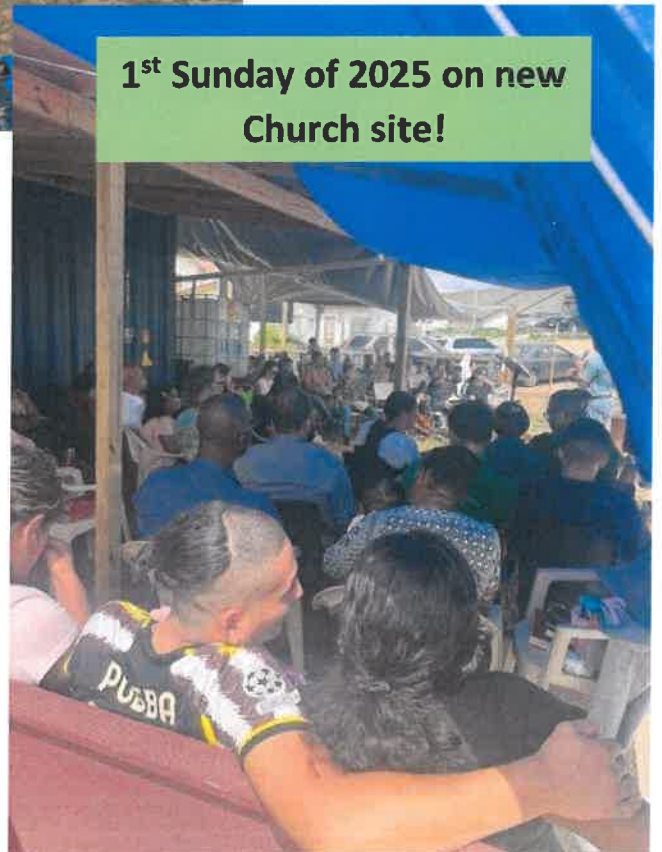
Blue = road / Red = retainer wall



Road to be built with roundabout at end...



1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of 2025 on new Church site!



Singing at Hospital...

