



From David Feikes, The Shepherd's Work

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The second trip to Belize was very productive. We poured both foundations which involves putting eight inches of concrete in a trench for the exterior of the building. For the first building we used a cement mixing machine and I had to hire five additional workers for the day. It took seven hours! One of the workers was named Hairson and he came to work for us after that! For the second foundation, I hired a truck, it only took a couple of hours, but the truck was an hour and half late. I only needed to hire two additional workers for a couple of hours to complete that job. For the second building, I was in the trench leveling the concrete but had to have Abel finish as the work and heat were too much. We did the last foundation on the very last day! It was something that I wanted to get accomplished.



We are working on the foundations here!

One of the highlights of this trip is we saw three monkeys at the property. They came from the river side of the jungle. They were holler monkeys. We hear them almost every morning but have not seen them since. Abel says they are hollering for rainwater! This is one of the reasons I planted plantains on the property. I hope to attract the monkeys. Abel was a farmer, and we are also planting peppers, which he grew from seedlings, okra, sunflowers, corn and Abel's favorite cucumbers. I will have to see what grows on the December/January return trip!



Monkeys

Another memorable event which I will not call a highlight is that it poured down rain when we tried to pour the floor for the first residential building. I decided to use concrete trucks and not mix it by hand. I ordered 19 yards of concrete. Everything was going well until about three quarters through the work it started pouring down rain. It was a downburst. The workers and I worked in the rain to finish the pour. It let up for a bit and Abel and I both knew how to fix the concrete; however, it poured rain again and we lost the floor! By lost I mean the floor is terribly pitted. At a later date I will either have to put a coating on the floor or tile the entire building. I was not going to tile the floors to save money, but I will have to see when we near the completion.



Video of the Rain!

In Belize, and in construction, something always goes wrong. Good contractors know that and take it in stride, they also know how to fix the problem. This project is a test of my patience!

Other setbacks included a couple of rain days. On one of the days, we cut the trees for what I hope is my future home. The ground in Belize is terrible difficult to work with. It is hard and full of rocks, for fill they bring in what they call white maul. When it rains everything gets muddy and sticks to your boots weighing you down. I love the dirt in Indiana which is often sandy!

On another day Abel and I put in the temporary electrical pole which needed to be in the ground three feet. A post hole digger was not much use and we took an iron piece of steel to break the rocks lose and some Abel had to break in half. This took over three hours!

We are making slow and steady progress. It is exciting to see the buildings taking shape. The building process will take three years.



Flower on the Property!

Third Trip

On the third trip of the summer July 15-August 8, we will be with the youth mission group from First Church of God from LaPorte, IN, led by pastor Ryan Shockey. Christy Livergood, a board member from The Shepherd's Work will be joining the mission trip and co-leading the one-day camp for intellectually disabled adults with me.

I will also be conducting a four-day workshop for primary teachers on mathematics at Sacred Heart Junior College in San Ignacio, Belize. Marty Briggs and Mary Cigan, two fourth-grade teachers from LaPorte Community Schools will be joining me. This will be my fourth workshop in Belize for primary teachers. I have also conducted a workshop for junior college math instructors and visited schools on two trips. I am excited to announce that we have 37 teachers signed up. This trip is funded entirely by funds from Purdue University Northwest.

Other Belize News

I am hoping to conduct a study abroad class for college students studying to be elementary teachers at both Purdue University Northwest and Purdue University in May 2026. Purdue Northwest has a fantastic program where students do not have to pay tuition but only the expenses for the trip. On that trip I will be accompanied by Bill Walker from Purdue University. Again, this trip is funded entirely by

student fees!

Bump for Belize

In other news the fundraiser at my daughter's sand beach volleyball courts in Westfield IN has been postponed again due to low enrollment of volleyball teams for the fundraiser. She is planning on trying again! I should add that she is in the process of building an indoor facility with multiple restaurants. Consequently, she currently has no onsite parking or running water.

Future Dates

- December 29 to January 7: I plan to return for 8 days to continue the construction process.
- March 13 to March 21 – This is my Spring Break. If all goes well, we may be working on the roof of the first building. I have decided to use Hardwood as the bugs and termites will not destroy it!
- May 17 to May 23 – Study Abroad class in Belize
- May 24 - June 2

Todos son bienvenidos a La Obra del Pastor!
All are welcome at The Shepherd's Work!

Thank you for reading!
David Feikes

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The Shepherd's Work | 4667 W. Burgundy Tr. | LaPorte, IN 46350 US

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