A story from your Global Ministries  

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest in me.”

Matthew 11:29

My Yoke is Easy and My Burden Light

Seven hours by bus through thunderous rains dousing rice fields and plantations. Another four hours by shuttle scaling the mountain roads revealing garden terraces carved out of the face of the earth taking me to meet with a welcoming group. Then into the back of a jeep which took us another three hours through winding dirt roads passing through mining sites, narrow ridge tops, eventually stopping at the far flung United Church of Christ in the small mountain community of Copcopit. Just the day before a member of the community, Abraham Decoyna, had died of cancer. We were there to share in the loss with the family gathered in his home, along with the entire community.

The people of Copcopit not only attend church together, they also work together, help raise each other’s children, cook together, and mourn together. Unity is regarded as essential in overcoming obstacles or seeing goals met. A break in unity could be devastating. They believe in consensus in everything connected to the community including funeral proceedings: what food to prepare, what clothes to dress the deceased in, and participating in the coffin construction. For four days we shared fellowship with the family. We held worship services each night in the family kitchen and shared meals together. As stories were shared by friends and family, laughter echoed late into the night, and the next morning it started again.

Throughout the week, people gave generously to the family. This is done with every family who suffers the loss of a loved one to lighten and share their burden for the costs of the four-day feasts, hospital bills, remaining debts, and a small amount for the family. Any amount remaining is given to an organization that helps this and surrounding communities during hardships. All in all, there was almost $3,000 raised. When faced with seemingly impossible odds or dealing with loss, not only does Copcopit have a community of faith to lean on, but they join in sharing the yoke of others. As the community shares the same yoke they share the same burden.

God, we pray for the people of Copcopit, and reflect on their community service and support of each other. Help us to be as generous and kind with our time and treasure.

Matthew Fehse serves with the human rights desk of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

You make the difference...

The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.

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