

WEB History Pages

2023

Jan:

Venezuelans: Pastor Gabriel (who replaced Pastor Gruezo after his untimely departure) is a quiet man who has a car electronics repair shop at the end of the street in front of his home. The Venezuelans that have moved into the community have not been welcomed with open arms by the community. Pastor Gabriel had invited Venezuelans to a music project at the church. There must have been 20 families attending! Thanks to Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church (CCPC), Pastor Gabriel was able to give a Bible to anyone not having one.



Venezuelans greeted by Pastor Gabriel



Sponsored Childres: This is similar to the “Compassion” program only it is not from people outside of Ecuador, it is individuals in the church here that are willing and able to mentor a child whose parents aren’t involved in the church. In fact, 5 pastors met to be introduced to mentoring in their individual congregation.

This is not the first time that the impoverished people here lent a helping hand to impoverished Venezuelan immigrants. In the past, CCPC held a clothes drive to bring down and ingredients were provided so that Pastor Gabriel’s church could hold a lunch for the Venezuelans.

Pastor Carlos: Our dear friend Carlos who had the heart surgery returned to Quito (an 8-hour bus ride) for a checkup. To our surprise he returned early and was in church on Sunday. The family invited us for lunch. He admitted his first church service was taxing but he was glad to be there. His recovery will be months.



Mandated Pay Increases: The government increased the minimum wage cost of living by \$25. To remain in sync with the government mandates, all 11 staff members had their salaries increased by that amount.

Feb:

Our hope is that what is shared draws a sense of “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” to each of you. Your prayers and gifts over 25 years continuously kindles the flame of the Holy Spirit among His people.

Pastor Gabriel asked Elizabeth if she would speak to the congregation at the Thursday evening service and that Jonathan Molina would translate. Elizabeth spoke on the ever presence of God in everyday life and had them look up Old and New Testament verses on the reliability of God. She shared examples of her insufficiency during the past 25 years to ‘solve’ all medical situations; and that God supplied people – much more capable than myself – that resolved her dilemma, enriched her faith, and deepened her relationship with God.



Pastor Gabriel and Elizabeth

Pastor Gabriel asked Richard and Elizabeth to come and sit in the chairs they placed facing the congregation. (*We both felt quite uncomfortable.*) Then, “Amazing Grace” began to play as two of the youth slowly walked down the aisle displaying an American flag and an Ecuadorian flag. With Jonathan translating, Pastor Gabriel said they wanted to thank us for all we had done for the community for the past 25 years. They presented us with a beautiful glass trophy with our names engraved. With humility we have never experienced. . . Two ladies came down the aisle carrying basins; they stooped, placed the basins at our feet and began washing our feet. This was followed by many others in the

congregation following suit. . . Obviously, the love of these people goes beyond any words. . . ***and you have been the foundation of our 25 years that have brought glory to God.***



We were able to have the delayed staff dinner and Christmas party that includes games and a White Elephant gift exchange. (They never caught on that each of them was to bring a gift. So, we have always provided the White Elephants. The one game we always play is pictured below. "Wiggle cracker into your mouth."



Clinic Staff



Back row: Fabian (lab tech) and Fabricio (custodian, lawyer, and assistant clinic director)

Front row: Eliana (accountant), Dra. Silvia (Medical Director), Mayra (nurse's aide),

Pepe (water tech), Pastor Meza (day guard), Michael (water tech), Jorge (water tech),

Dra. Karolina (Dentist), Moises (water tech) Loly (administrative assistant)

Jose Chaves: Our laughter soon turned to great sorrow. Jose is on our FBS (Fundación Buen Samaritano) Ecuadorian Board. A year or so ago he stopped to introduce us to his wife and asked us to come and visit. Pictured below is Jose, his wife, and their five-day old baby at Maria's birthday party. Shockingly, we were notified the next morning that Maria had died from a lethal infarct or cardiac arrest. His sisters are helping to care for little Sofia Esther. We all grieve with Jose and pray for God's mercy and comfort to this dear man and his new infant daughter.



Brian Garcia: In Elizabeth's book Brian is the young boy to the far right in Elizabeth's first English class. . . He is now 25 and was asked to head the church's youth group. He contacted me because he wanted to do a good job as youth leader and thought I might have ideas or possibly a youth pastor that could give him some fresh ideas. I connected him with Izzie Intriago whose father is from Ecuador and she herself is fluent in Spanish and very active in the youth group at her church. We met with Brian to discuss his needs concerning the youth group in his church. Ultimately, Brian mustered up the courage and asked if Richard could speak to the Youth Group. . . Since February was the 'season of love' he hoped Richard could speak on that topic. Richard was enthusiastically received and given a mug since *everyone* knows he loves coffee.



Richard and Brian Garcia



Youth group

The last few days in El Floron were hectic to say the least! Our abundantly producing mango tree had to be removed – roots threatened to invade the water production building; already the sidewalk was curdling and the sewer line required digging and pipe replacement.



Apr:

Quilters: The “Quilters” at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church (CCPC) supplied us with so many baby quilts that we were able to give quilts to a newly discovered orphanage besides our new mothers coming to the Buen Samaritano Clinic.



Our Quito friend Consuelo giving an orphanage volunteer a new blanket

La Prosperina: “La Prosperina” is a new mission for mothers and children. An American couple purchased a run-down coffee plantation they are reviving; and with the coffee beans sales they are building two homes for abused moms and children. We were invited to their grand opening of a coffee house in the town square in the city called Jipijapa (Hippy – hoppa) – known for making Panama Hats but its true origin can be traced back to its sister city (Montecristi), not far away, in 1630.



Elizabeth, Flori (lawyer), Richard



Coffee house under Panama Hat

Music Mission: Richard spent the majority of his time preparing for June's upcoming Christian music mission – all the way from formal permission from the city of Portoviejo to hold the Christian concert to electrical work necessary for the clinic concert. For those of you familiar with "The Chosen" a couple of episodes will be shown in the Clinic parking lot and Pastor Gabriel will continue to show this at the church in the weeks to follow. Yes! This is an entirely new evangelism avenue ... During the day, the music team will work with church members to improve skills and to actually give out new instruments. The Mission will occur in June of this year – so more to come.

Jose Chaves: We planned to visit Jose (the lawyer who lost his wife 5 days after the birth of their first child) but instead they came to us along with his two sisters and mother who is mute.



Elizabeth, Jose's mother, Jose and two sisters



Sofia Esther

One sister cares for Sofia at night and one during the day. Jose seemed to be doing well and two weeks ago Sofia Esther was presented to the congregation.

Floron 8: This area of Floron was the last area developed and is commonly known as the most dangerous area regarding crime and also the economically poorest. Our clinic day guard, Pastor Mesa, wife Bella and family have resided in Floron 8 for many, many years. Pastor Mesa and family were specifically located there as a 'church plant' ... the one room chapel has had many challenges including the last major earthquake and multiple Venezuelans locating in this squatter's village.



We have given Bibles periodically and were pleased/thankful we could assist with crayons, pencils, and Biblical coloring pages for the increased number of children attending their midweek after school program and Sunday School.

Prayer Time: When we are leaving for the airport we always pray holding hands in a circle with either Richard or I praying. However, our four water guys smiled at each other ... and then Jorge offered a beautiful prayer. These are the four young men who influenced our decision two years ago to make morning devotions mandatory. We cannot express our inexplicable joy and awareness of the Holy Spirit.



Jun:

Our first Music Mission:

It was all hands-on deck the week before the team arrived – sprucing up the clinic property inside and outside, preparing their living quarters and food. Elizabeth and Tatiana (cook we used for many years for medical teams) spent several hours preparing for the meals.



Tatiana

Finally, the group from Colorado Community Church arrived in Floron 5 on Monday June 12th and departed Sunday June 18th. It was multi-faceted, fast pace, in between with many events.



Back Row:

Daniel (bass guitar – Pastor Mountain View Christian Church), **Kaitlin** (keyboard – Deputy Director of “More than Music”), **Chris** (saxophone, flute, harmonica, keyboard – Director of Worship Arts – Colorado Community Church), **Terrill** (drums – Director of Global Production Engineering)

Front Row:

Cleofe (singer – IT Specialist – Cherry Creek Public Schools), **Victoria** (singer – Engineering Project Manager), **Ashely** (singer – Empower Client Service Manager), **Suzanna** (singer – HS Spanish Teacher), **Elizabeth** (singer – IT Project Manager)

Note: Chris (Christopher Lang) is a active member of Mercy Music located in Aurora and hi’ghlighted on their website (www.mercymusic.org) as a music missionary. Many of the music instruments were donated by Mercy Music.

1st Concert:

The first concert was under the stars just outside of Pastor Meza’s church in Floron 8 the day they arrived.



Team luncheon with pastors Gabriel, Jhon, Alexi and Yandri to discuss the schedule they had planned for the remaining days. (The team ate all of their meals on the roof of our apartment.)

Wednesday evening was the ‘concert on the roof’ ... followed by the showing of Season 1 (episodes 4&5) of “The Chosen” in the clinic parking lot. . . another standing room only event.



Friday evening and Saturday morning the team spent at the church with budding musicians. . . and all the instruments they had brought. They divided up according to the instrument they played and the singers gave lessons in the church. The instruments that they brought to Ecuador for donating (2 Keyboards, 2 Bass guitars, 6 violin's, 1 Acoustic guitar, 2 Electric guitars, 1 Saxophone, 1 complete Drum set, 1 Drum repair kit and 1 Drum training kit). **WOW!!**



The big night arrived - Setting up at Las Vegas Park, Portoviejo Saturday afternoon. The lighting and sound systems were impressive. Three other churches (Grupo Emanuel 3:16 from Montecristi, Grupo Emanuel from Floron #5, Banda Hidall from Portoviejo) pre-empted the American group Grupo C3 from the Colorado Community Church.



During the concerts the Youth Group passed out 197 Bibles that were provided by Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church and Colorado Community Church.

The mission was loved by all and considered a huge success!! The team would love to return in 2024.