

GuatesUP?



Pastor Liz has been serving, leading and supporting Recycled Lives since our beginning. She serves on the board of directors, Pastors a wonderful congregation of generous, loving siblings in Christ at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tower, MN and organizes yearly mission teams to Guatemala whom fundraise the vast majority of our ministry project funding. Liz is a natural shepherd, has such a generous heart; giving of her time, love, skills and resources. She works crazy hard and gives her all in everything she does. She is such a blessing to everyone! She shares some of her recent reflections and prayers for Guatemala on page 2.

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Recycled Lives

PO Box 408

Cambridge, MN 55008

Online: www.RecycledLives.org

Update from the Mission Field: Praise & Prayer- From the Johnson's in Guatemala

Over the past 3 weeks we have purchased & packed close to 8,000 pounds of food & hygiene supplies. We have assisted with setting up a sanitizing station with supplies at the entrance of the San Gabriel community to help decrease the spread of disease. We have delivered over 400 emergency food packages to recently unemployed & struggling families. ***(Father God, we give thanks & praise to You!)*** We have spent more time on the phone than I can even calculate trying to track down the food & supplies we need that are in short supply & more costly than ever. We wait hours in the overcrowded market parking lot for our order to be tossed in the back of the truck to avoid going directly into markets & stores. ***(we pray for patience for ourselves and for the safety of workers the workers in stores & markets)***. The country is on stay at home orders, a 4pm to 4am curfew, there are road blocks at every city & department line. If allowed to pass for documented reasons, you are temperature checked & sanitized as well & the vehicle tires are sanitized. ***(we pray for strength, health and wisdom for leaders & frontline workers)***. Nearly everyone is out of work, without any form of assistance to get through this. ***(we pray for peace for all of us as we struggle to understand what is/will be happening)***. People are desperate and are placing white flags outside of their doors to inform anyone that may be able to help them that they are in desperate need of food. People are starving and we are just in the beginning stages of the crisis. ***(Lord have mercy, hear our prayers)***.

Though it seems we can only make a small dent in the sea of needs surrounding each of us.... please know, that dent makes a BIG difference! ***(Father, please give us this day our daily bread; bring help to every family in crisis throughout the world)***. We are thankful for so many of you that immediately responded in generous giving. ***(Father, keep our eyes on you so we know clear ways we are to be helping others)***. We are blessed & encouraged to have the opportunity to partner with other faith based ministries to meet needs that are tremendous & overwhelming. ***(we thank you Father that the needs are not too tremendous for You. We lift up all missionaries on the ground fighting for our brothers & sisters in need)***. Saying we are tired is an understatement, but ***thanks be to God***, we have stayed healthy and He gives strength each day to keep going. Even though just about everything is "different & not normal" right now; one thing remains completely unchanged: GOD ***(Hallelujah!)*** I believe everything is different, because it is supposed to be... we are being given the opportunity to define what should be normal...being God's living, breathing church with skin on.... right where we are in whatever circumstances we are facing. ***(Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done)***. Do you feel the Holy Spirit moving within you and do you feel greater freedom to listen & respond? This is a pivotal time as followers of Jesus to respond like Jesus to the circumstances and world around us. May we find ourselves passionately and wholeheartedly giving ***praise, thanks and Glory to God for His provision*** in all things! ***Can I get an Amen!***

We will continue to buy, package & deliver what is funded! Keep it coming! Lives literally depend on it.

Grace and peace to you all during this uncertain, strange and unprecedented time in which we find ourselves all around the world. As I sit at my kitchen table this morning for prayer and devotional time my mind wanders to our siblings in Christ in Guatemala. It is a rollercoaster of emotions that come over me. First warm thoughts of love and curiosity on how everyone is doing. I pray for the families I have a personal connection with and also pray for all families, San Gabriel, families near the mission house, the country and our missionaries Shawn and Brad.

The tears slowly roll down my face as I wonder what this virus will do to the country and the people I love so much. You see for the most part we, you and I, are comfortable sheltering in our homes. We have everything we need. It's probably safe to say we have almost everything we could ever want. We have shelter, heat, food and phones to stay in touch with our loved ones. We have vehicles to get us to the store, pharmacy, and clinic when we need to pick up the essentials or be seen by a doctor. We have the financial means and stability to get through this situation even if it takes months.

The tears roll down my face as I think about how our Guatemalan friends struggle each and every day without the threat of a virus to survive. They lack what we consider "the basics" for daily living without the threat of a virus to survive. Without the threat of a virus, they struggle daily to meet the needs of food, water, and health. The tears roll down as I wonder how they will survive if this virus enters their community.

The roller coaster of emotions continue as I lift up in my prayers our missionaries Shawn and Brad who made the very difficult (and maybe crazy) decision to stay in Guatemala during this time. While they are safe and like you and I have the comfort of a home to provide shelter, food and basic necessities, life in Guatemala during this time is not easy (well it never was easy, it's just even harder now). Curfews have been implemented; you can only leave your home from 4:00 am – 4:00 p.m. It is now mandatory to wear masks while out in public. My mind wanders again.... Where will the folks in San Gabriel get masks to wear? They can't drive to the store, they have no money.... And then I am assured by the pictures on Facebook that Shawn and Brad, because of generous donations by you our donors, were able to purchase 700 masks and distribute them! Praise God!

And that's another concern.... Guatemala is implementing very strict rules right now as they fight for their people and their country. Travel outside departments (what we would consider county lines) is prohibited except for humanitarian purposes and food transport. Brad and Shawn have been busy distributing masks, carrying out the monthly food distribution as well as getting and preparing extra food during this time to be distributed. The risk of getting stopped and questioned while they are out and about is high. We give thanks and praise to God that so far they have been able to make it through all the checkpoints and we continue to pray for their safety and well-being during this difficult time.

My mind wanders again as I begin to give thanks to God for these very relationships with our friends in Guatemala. My life has forever been changed by these friendships, by the families I've met, by the people of San Gabriel, by the mission and ministry of Recycled Lives and Shawn and Brad. I give thanks that I can be stopped in my tracks and humbled to the core for all that I have and to be moved by generosity and love to share my abundance with others. I give thanks that I have been called to share my time, my prayers, my love, my money, my faith with people that are so different than I am, and yet who are just like me.

My tears have stopped rolling and gratitude has filled my heart this morning. My mind wanders to new life, new hope, a new future when I can return to give hugs and see my people! I give thanks to God for the many blessings I have received because I have seen His hand, His work, His love in the lives of people who have nothing and yet have everything in faith, who trust that what they need will be provided somehow, someday and who love like Jesus more than anyone I have ever known. They have great mentors in our missionaries Shawn and Brad who embody a love like Jesus, share God's love to all and embrace the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead them to the people that need them most.

During this difficult time, we remind ourselves that we are in this together! During this difficult time we pray for one another. During this difficult time, we put our faith in action! So I invite you friends of Recycled Lives to put your faith in action and remember our missionaries, our organization and all the people we serve in your prayers, in your financial donations, in your service to our great and mighty God!

Praise and thanks be to God!