

# Mission to the Children

## News Update

Website: [www.missiontothechildren.org](http://www.missiontothechildren.org)

Email: [info@missiontothechildren.org](mailto:info@missiontothechildren.org)

July, 2020

### *PASTOR'S CORNER*

***"God is our refuge and strength, a helper who can always be found in times of trouble." (Psalm 46:1)***

Martin Luther's beloved hymn ***A Mighty Fortress is our God*** is one of the best-known paraphrases of Psalm 46 and has been called "The Battle Hymn of the Reformation." As Luther and his contemporaries stuck for their sole reliance on God's Word as the source for God's truth. They faced numerous challenges because of this. For we who can look at their early struggles against the forces of their day with 20/20 hindsight, we can see how God worked through these Reformers to bring a renewed focus on God's grace.

Circumstances did not seem so solid for Luther and his contemporaries at the time. Due to the insurmountable challenges and unexpected changes they faced, their fluid and uncertain situation probably felt surprisingly similar to our current one.

Yet Christians have a truth that is always with them. Psalm 46:1 assures us that God is our refuge from every storm and strength in every weakness. He is our helper who can be found in every trying time that life throws at us. It is this sentiment which Martin Luther set to song in ***A Mighty Fortress is our God*** when he unknowingly penned "The Battle Hymn of the Reformation."

Even though our current days are a far cry from Luther's, we have every reason to sing that beloved hymn. For we too have God's promise given to us as told in Psalm 46:1. And as we continue to adapt to through these coronavirus days, let us always hold fast to this promise.

***By Pastor Tim Patoka***

### *PRESIDENT'S CORNER*

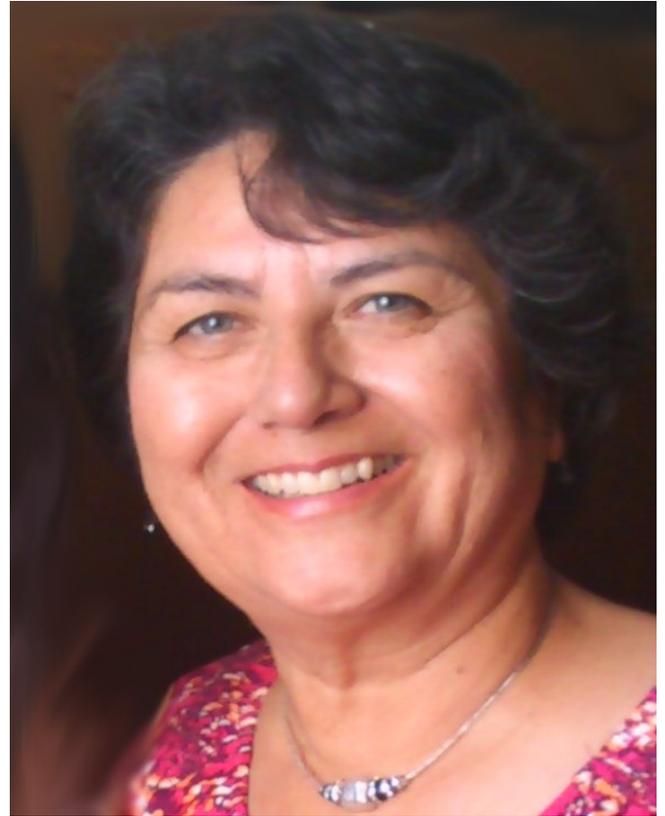
As most likely all of you are doing, Karen and I are sequestered here in Southern Arizona by order of our Governor since our state has a rapidly growing number of COVID-19 cases. One of the advantages of being in my home all day is that I can see stacks of papers that have accumulated over the years that need to be read, filed or discarded (gulp!). In the last few years my nieces in WI have been posting Throwback Thursdays on their Facebook pages. They post things from the past that are wonderful and fascinating. Sooooo, since we have no reports due to the Mexican border being closed, I decided to do a Throwback MttC 2006 which I thought you might enjoy and find interesting. As you read, you will also realize that, while 14 years have gone by fast, not a whole lot has changed in the area we serve since these two reports were filed. You will find them elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our prayers continue for all of you. The last three days I have found out that five close relatives in Tucson, Phoenix and Virginia have COVID-19. This knowledge has increased my prayer life dramatically and made this plague much more personal. We ask that you stay safe, be careful for yourself and your family and be considerate of others. One day we will find out who are behind all those masks we see around us!!!! Please keep the Mission in your prayers as we hope to be able to go back soon. Thank you!

***By Ruth Schaller***

### ***IN MEMORY***

Mission to the Children honors the life and memory of yet another of our long-term volunteers. Maria was right there at the beginning of the ministry, serving as translator and interpreter for Gene Durfey in the tiny church in the squatters brick-making village of La Ladrillera. From this tiny village the ministry spread to a final number of 11 preaching stations where Maria continued her volunteer work on so many levels, even serving on the Board of Directors for several years. Even when she could no longer volunteer, she kept up her friendships with many of us. Having come up through the ranks of hunger and poverty herself, Maria evidenced a special love and compassion for the people we are blessed to serve. Our hearts and love go out to her family on the suddenness of her death by cancer. We shall miss you, Maria.



***Maria Cervantez - 1952-2020***

### ***MtC THROWBACKS***

***Articles from the past trips to Mexico by people who took those trips down to our villages. Enjoy the memories.***

***South of the Border,***  
***Summer, 2006***  
***Reprinted with permission of***  
***Professor Lawrence Olson, Martin***  
***Luther College.***

This was not my first trip to Mexico. My wife and I once spent some time in Matamoras, just across the border from Brownsville, Texas. One summer we took our six children to the Yucatan Peninsula, where we spent two weeks enjoying the beaches, visiting Spanish

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colonial sites, and learning about Mayan history and culture. We recently went to Guadalajara to visit our son Jonathan, who was doing graduate study in Spanish at the University of Guadalajara. And I've made four or five trips to Juarez for authentic Mexican sushi.... but that's another story.

Mission to the Children is something that my family and I have been interested in and supportive of for a number of years, so I was looking forward to making a trip to Sonora, Mexico, with Jonathan Zarling, a student of mine who was serving as a staff ministry intern at Grace in Tucson, Arizona, and Ruth Schaller, the Medical Advisor for MttC. We rendezvoused at Grace early on a cold and rainy Saturday in March, so cold that it had actually snowed the night before, a rarity in the desert. We packed a number of boxes filled with a variety of supplies into the 15-passenger van, and soon we were headed out of town.

It took an hour and a half or more for us to reach the border crossing, so Ruth was able to fill me in on the development of MttC and its current work, and Jon shared his impressions from having made two previous visits. After crossing at Sasabe, we stopped briefly at the Children's Center there, where some ladies were hard at work cleaning. Ruth took care of some business with Benjamin Valenzuela and

Patricia Romero, two of the Mexican volunteers. Then it was on to Cerro Prieto, where we met up with Pastor Ron Baerbock and his wife Karen for a worship service.

This service was a little different from what we are used to in the US. For one thing, it was held outside. A fairly sizeable group of mostly women and children, with a few men scattered here and there, had gathered under the trees in the yard in front of one of the village homes.

Some sat on stackable plastic chairs, while others stood, and all were subject to the brisk wind and cold rain that would probably send us running for home if that is what we found at "church". But they waited patiently, and after worship folders had been distributed, Pastor Baerbock began the service. Other than the Spanish language, it would have been familiar to most of us: hymns, Scripture readings, prayers, a devotion/sermon, and so on. This underscored for me the way that the Church Triumphant is described in the Book of Revelation, with "people from every nations, tribe, language, and people" (Rev. 7:9) gathered in worship. After the service, there was both the familiar and the unfamiliar. There were smiles, greetings, handshakes and hugs-time spent in fellowship in many of the same ways that we spend time after church in the US. But there was also the unfamiliar. You don't usually have an open-air, dirt-floor "fellowship

halls” in the States, and I have never yet seen chickens occasionally wander through a coffee hour. Even more unfamiliar was the quiet, orderly distribution of vouchers. Ruth and Karen, assisted by some of the Mexican women, distributed coupons to mothers with children, which they could then take to local “tiendas.” Small “general stores” where they could use them to purchase staples such as beans or rice to feed their families. The amount is small—you or I might not be able to get lunch at an American fast food joint with the equivalent amount of US currency, even if we ordered off the dollar menu—but it is a tremendous help to families struggling with the poverty so pervasive in the villages of the Sonoran desert. As I watched the women’s thankful smiles, I could hear Jesus saying, “I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat” (Matthew 25:35).

We made stops at several other villages that day, including a visit to the Baerbocks home in Atil, before heading north. What will I remember?

- The long stretches of desolate desert traversed by rough dirt roads.
- The hospitality of the people, who sat us down and fed us after the conclusion of the services in two different locations
- The willingness of the villages to brave the wind, rain, and cold in order to hear the Gospel
- The stark conditions of most of the housing, some with glassless windows and dirt floors
- The dedication of the volunteers, who give so selflessly of their time, energy, and resources
- The groups of mostly young men gathering in the dusk to attempt

an illegal border crossing in order to find work

- The gratitude of those who are being fed, body and (most importantly) soul, through the ministry of Mission to the Children.

As I said, this was not my first trip to Mexico. It was a long, tiring day, but a rewarding day, one that left me with an enduring sense of thankfulness to God that he is blessing the work of Mission to the Children. May he continue to do so!

### **Mission to the Children Trip** **Report, June 4, 2006,** **filed by Lori Hauser.**

On Thursday I went to Grace Church to pick up the van and found that it had been left a real mess. This is just a reminder to everyone: If you drive a MttC van you are responsible to clean the garbage out when you get back. I remember the time cheese got left in one for a month and the smell could have knocked one out. Mary Ann and I picked up the pesos from Patti at Sam’s Club and then Ruth, Mary Ann and I went and picked up the oxygen concentrator to take down on Friday. We went to the storage unit and left some old records and one of the seats to the van. OK, on with the trip report.

Jeff and Jack (from Shepherd of the Hills), Paul (my son) and Libby (a friend) left Tucson at 6:30, headed down to Atil to work on the electrical system in the large room (the Bodga which would become the church.) At noon Mary Ann and Nancy and Sarah (Jeff’s sister and her daughter) and I headed down through Nogales. We got two green lights when we crossed the border, so we did not have to stop and

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be inspected. I had washed and cleaned the van. What a mistake!! We ran into rain, hail, and a dust storm along the way. The desert smelled so good after the rain and we were so thankful for the clouds. We introduced Nancy and Sarah to fresh coconut at one of the stands along the way. We arrived in San Manuel and found the ladies trying to disassemble the tarp as it was blowing in the wind. They said that before the storm came up, it was 109 degrees! I thanked the Lord many times for the nice weather he gave us. Pastor and Karen Baerbock arrived at 4 p.m. and started the Bible Class with about 50 adults. Karen and Nancy gave Bible lessons to about 60 children. The store owner provided us dinner of shredded beef tacos.

Pastor and Karen headed to La Sangre while we settled the accounts, then followed to La Sangre. We had about 60 adults and 30 children for the lessons. We settled accounts at the store where an addition gave the owner a lot more room; it looked great. Pastor and Karen had gone on to San Jose where we joined them. The scene was so beautiful as the sun was setting and all were sitting under the big mesquite tree studying: 16 adults and 15 children. We decided not to go on to El Ocuca to drop off the oxygen concentrator as the ill girl was not there at the moment. Pastor said he would talk to the family and we left the machine with him at the parsonage in Atil. We drove on to Altar to meet the

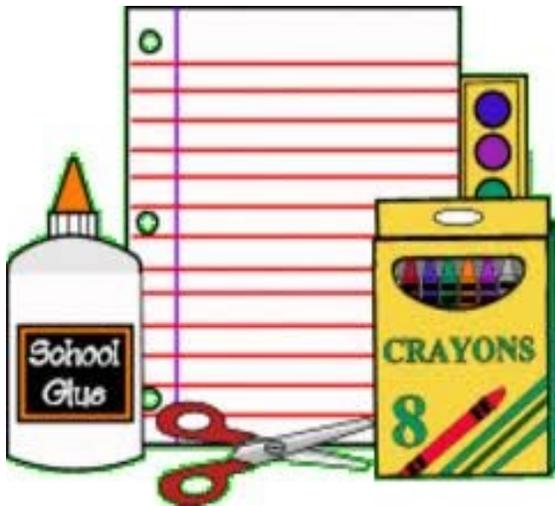
rest of our group and had supper about 8:30. We tried to pick up sleeping bags from Luz Maria, but she was not home. We arrived at Atil about 10 p.m. for the night.

After a good night's sleep, Karen Baerbock had fruit, coffee cake, juice and bagels for us for breakfast. Pastor started the outdoor Bible study at 7:30 a.m. with 40 women and 15 children. I was so sad when I found out that the 10-month old baby boy with cancer had died 8 days ago; the grandmother died the next day! I am keeping this family in my prayers. We went to pay the store and found out some coupons had not yet been turned in. I left the list so the store could check off the names when the women came in and will do the same now each month. We joined Pastor and Karen at Tubutama and handed out food coupons after the classes were done. The people were very excited to split out the children to have their own class as this is one of our largest groups; several mothers commented on how nice it was. We added two families to this list: one from our program in Cerro Prieto and one from San Juan. We did a little tour of a mission church close by, paid the store and then went on to La Reforma where we had 20 adults and 20 children. Jeff (my husband) met us there. Eva gave us tortillas. She is having more pain in her knee. Everyone had missed Mary Ann and we were so glad she felt well enough to come along today. We left around 1

p.m. for the three-hour trip to the border home; we stopped at Tiny's for lunch on the way back to Tucson. I took the van home to have it clean for the group of students arriving on Tuesday. Mary Ann may have to take them to the airport on the 14<sup>th</sup> as I will be out of town. Now that you have to read all this, tell me if you really want me to send one every month. Be careful what you ask for!!!! Lori

## Rulers School Back-Packs

We are still taking Walmart and Target gift cards for the purchase of school supplies too. Our schools in Tucson are supposed to open in August 2020 and hopefully the border will be opened by then for the delivery of school supplies.



It's that time of the year for Mission to the Children's School Supplies Drive. The border is still closed, but we want to have the supplies for each village ready so that when the border opens, we will be able to deliver them to the children.

### ***List of School Supplies Needed:***

- Pencils
- Colored Pencils
- Crayons/Scissors
- Glue Sticks
- Small Bottles of Elmer Glue
- College Ruled Notebooks