

Dear friends, family, supporters,

Happy 2021! I pray this new year finds you strong in the LORD. We have so much to be thankful for as we consider the old and rejoice in the new.

Isn't it wonderful that God gives us new opportunities each and everyday to grow in our faith and likeness to Jesus!!! For this I give thanks to God ask for His mercies as I seek to grow more like HIM each day. I am far from perfect. And the more I grow in my faith the more I realize that self-perfection is not my goal --- but perfect reliance on God is.

Praise be to God the life and ministry of the Methodist Church in El Salvador marches forward. While COVID-19 has brought many challenges and closed many doors – God continues to open windows and new opportunities for his WORD to thrive in the lives of many. God continues to open new opportunities to share the message of HOPE and undying LOVE in a world that cannot understand these things. New ministries are growing and thriving despite many challenges.

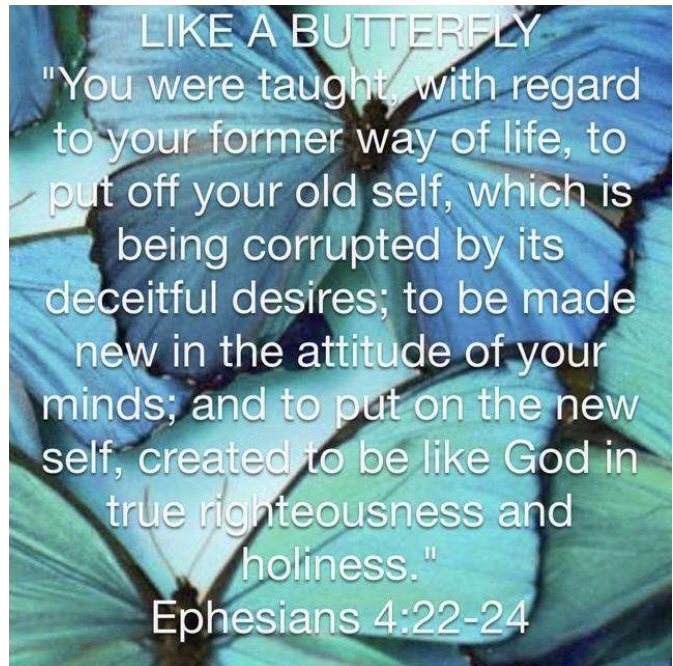
UPDATE on my RETURN to EL SALVADOR and CONTINUING work and ministry.

First things first...confessions out of the way. THANK YOU for your prayers and encouragement to me...with the turning upside down of everything I once knew due to the pandemic I have lost the habit of keeping you updated. This was a habit I had set goals to improve upon at the beginning of 2020, not realizing how real the struggle would become. SO, THANK YOU for your GRACE as I seek once again to develop this habit of regular updates.

Brief recap of 2020 and update on how my work is looking in 2021

On February 28ish I traveled to North Carolina to begin a three-week-tour of visiting family, churches, and friends in both NC and Georgia. It was a blessed three weeks where God reminded me of the importance of the connection between local churches and the "mission field" for lack of a better word. I was reminded of my call to serve as a missionary and of the great gifts of from where I had been sent. It was a humbling experience to share in my home church in Rocky Mount, NC where I stood before people who had nurtured my faith from my childhood to lead me to this very moment in my personal walk with Christ. God is so very good!

Then came March 12 – the day I was so excited to return to my family and work in El Salvador – but didn't get to go so soon. Not until August was I able to complete that journey. In the meantime, there was a lot of prayer, devotion time, beginning of online teaching, open heart surgery, healthy recovery from surgery, quality time with family and friends that I did not expect to receive.





Upon my return to El Salvador in August 2020 I put all energies into reconnecting with Brian and Camila. After over six months of unplanned separation in the midst of a world pandemic...reuniting brought some new challenges that we had not expected. But God is so good and walked us through all those challenges and today our family bond is so much stronger.

God has been good to our family in so many ways through the pandemic. In February 2020, a week before my trip to the US, God gave Brian and I a very clear warning that we need to change homes. At the time we were renting a nice home in the same neighborhood as the school. Camila had two friends to play with and we had great space for our family. But an incident happened that quickly alerted us to the need to move – the owner of the home was eager to sell the house and that put us in compromised safety.



We talked with the current landlord at the time, prayed together as a family, and waited for God's answer. With a day or two, we found another home to rent in a near-by neighborhood, offering better security. The plan was to move the week after I returned from traveling...but my return was different that we had planned. Praise be to God, Brian and Camila were able to move into our new home days before the country was placed on quarantine and not allowed to leave their homes. As I was separated from Brian and Camila, words alone do not express the comfort I felt in knowing that they were in a safe location with space to walk outside in our new garden space. This was one of the many ways that God confirmed to me that this move was

His providential care in our lives. Not our desire to go to a different home, but His protection lived out.

Our new home is way more than we would have ever chosen for ourselves, but God gives us daily reminders that He choose this as a place of refuge, re-charging, family time, and basking in the glory of HIS creation and great love for creation. On our back porch we regularly receive visits from birds such as toucans, torogoz (the national bird of El Salvador), orange and black orioles, hummingbirds, as well as squirrels, geckos, swifts, butterflies, and probably more critters that we have yet to see. We have a front seat to the beautiful landscape of El Salvador, its mountains, and volcanos. We regularly watch the rising and setting of the sun. We are so thankful for God's continued goodness to us.



We were able to slowly return to meeting with our church congregation here in Ahuachapan....Brian and I are not the leaders of this church....simply blessed to be included in the congregation. We follow protocols recommended by Bishop Juande – masks, social distancing, temperature check upon entry to sanctuary as well as sanitation of hands and shoes. It is such a blessing to meet at church to worship and grow in the community of faith.



Our school year ended in November with online classes. And just yesterday, January 5, the ministry of Education in El Salvador made an announcement that the upcoming school year, (the school year here is from mid- January to early-November) will begin with online classes to protect the student population from the currently rising numbers of COVID-19.

Online studies bring the same challenges here in El Salvador as many confront in the US. Not everyone has the same quality of access to the online platforms. One day at a time we as the educational community seek to do our best to reach each student where they need to be met – if only to give them a word of encouragement to keep pushing forward.

In 2020 our students of Colegio Metodista faced the loss of family members along with the challenge of not having the presence of teachers and classmates to comfort in this loss. PLEASE lift these students in your prayers in an extra special way – that God would fill them with comfort and a peace that is beyond our understanding. Families lost work and means for providing for each day – while giving thanks for tortillas on the family table. PLEASE keep families of El Salvador in your prayers. The gap between the haves and have-nots grows wider daily, yet I regularly hear praises of how God has not left the table empty once during the pandemic. For many Salvadoran families a daily meal is a corn tortilla with a little cheese and beans.

The challenge of online classes brings the opportunity to develop new skills. The teachers at the Methodist School have been and continue to be committed to training opportunities opening our abilities and strengths for serving the student body with distance learning. We use the platforms of WhatsApp and Google Classroom as well as Facebook Messenger, Tik Tok, and YouTube to keep in regular contact with our students

MY GOAL for 2021 is to serve our ENGLISH students with excellence in the online setting, to continue investing in the professional development of young adult missionaries who are a VITAL part of this

teaching ministry and to continue investing time into **developing faith development resources to support the Methodist Churches of El Salvador in their discipleship ministries.**

THANK you for your continued prayers for me and my family, for the ministries of the Methodist FAMILY in EL Salvador and for our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ here in El Salvador. I promise to give you another update sooner, rather than later – hopefully before the end of January.



Please keep me updated on ways that I can be in prayer for you, your congregation and community.

GRACE and PEACE!

Ellyn Dubberly

JOIN in partnership with God's work in El Salvador.....

PRAY

Pray for children and families in El Salvador, the ministries of the Methodist Church in El Salvador, the safety of church leaders and congregation members, the growing family bond of the Dubberly family.....

GIVE

To support Ellyn's work go to this link: [Dubberly, Ellyn Benson - Global Ministries \(umcmmission.org\)](https://umcmmission.org)

To support a student at Colegio Metodista go to this link: [Sembrando Raices Scholarship Fund - Home](#)

SHARE

Tell others about what God is doing in El Salvador – you can share all communication that I share with you. I hope to offer a few opportunities soon for us to connect through zoom for more of a discussion format of updating you on what is happening in El Salvador. This is a great way to invite others to hear a little more of the story.

CONTACT ME

I love to hear from you too! I want to pray for you and know how God is at work in your life and community. Also, it helps me to know when you want to know more about what is going on in my life and ministry. Send me a message.

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