The Blanz Family

Missionaries to Costa Rica

Dear Friends and Family, January 2021

Happy new year! We hope that each of you gets a good start to the new year. As difficult as it was this last year, we are thankful for God's faithfulness through it all. This year, we hope to take some big steps forward! We held a small Christmas party for the children's ministry, which was a big step in the right direction. Michelle organized a Christmas event for the ladies ministry, which also saw positive movement towards in-person services. For our regular services, most still connect online, but we are seeing a gradual return to in-person services. Last month we saw several answered prayer requests. First, right before Christmas we finally received the last approval letter from the government for our residency. This means we can now finish the process and resolve many of the legal hurdles we have faced in the ministry. As far as evangelism is concerned, we are seeing others get involved in visitation. We also gained access to visit one more gated neighborhood, which is a blessing. Due to the legal hurdles and COVID regulations, it has been near impossible to find a suitable location to hold services. Ever since the complete ban on church services was lifted in September, Jeremy has been working hard to find a place to hold services. We exhausted nearly every possible option. However, last month Jeremy was able to speak with some local business owners about an idea that could be a blessing for the both of us. it turns out that they are Christians and have great respect for the work of church planting. Not only that, but this plan would end up being highly beneficial for both of us! After a couple weeks of praying and working out the details, we made an arrangement to rent the use of their business location on Sundays to hold services. Beginning in January, we are starting a weekly in-person children's Sunday School class. We are also holding a special service to give thanks to God for His faithfulness this last year and for providing us a suitable place to meet. We also have plans to do a Vacation Bible School near the end of the month.

Last month Elijah was able to get his stitches removed. Unfortunately, they could not remove all of them. We ended up having to schedule another appointment to remove more of the stitches which were quite deep. Thankfully, he is healing up fairly well. During Christmas it was difficult to be away from our family. Michelle's parents were able to come visit at the end of the month. That was a big blessing.

As we begin the near year, it appears that 2021 will be a year of both great challenges and great opportunities. There is now a second wave of COVID hitting Costa Rica and the government has already announced stricter regulations beginning in January. This month, please pray:

1. That God blesses the in-person children's Sunday School class and the Vacation Bible School.
2. That God will give us a great start at the new meeting location.
3. That God will continue to establish His church and use us to reach even more souls for Christ in 2021.

In Christ,

Jeremy, Michelle, Lila, Ellowyn, and Elijah Blanz

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