

Many Gifts, One Spirit Part 2



The drive from San Salvador to Usulután is long and flat. The climate, at a lower altitude and closer to the Pacific Ocean, is oppressively hot and seemingly more vulnerable to the side effects of climactic changes brought about by a combination of global warming and the deforestation that occurred during the civil war in the 1980s--- a war that ended

the lives of more than 70,000 Salvadorans.

Pastor Julio Chavez presides over 4 congregations in Usulután, including My Good Jesus in Puerto Parada, the sister church of Grace Lutheran Church in Thiensville. Near the Pacific coast, this congregation with some help from the Greater Milwaukee Synod has cultivated an area in which to nurture both shrimp and salt harvests. These commodities are made available for consumption to the local citizens, but are also sold in the city for a modest profit.

The staple food throughout El Salvador is corn and frijoles (beans), and the harvest in Usulután is no exception. But in 2010, tropical storms destroyed the crops twice. Even months after the rains subsided, standing water remains, and the people in Puerto Parada pray every day for relief.

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Unfortunately, repairs to the levies can only be provided after the rainy season ends. Meanwhile, most people remain despite waters that have invaded their homes and are receding slowly at best.



Pastor Julio walks among them, sharing in their tragedy, while sustaining their faith in God. Pastor Julio's vision of a better life for the people in his community includes working with the young men in his congregation to open an agricultural supply store. Funding and paperwork are complete, and the store is scheduled to open in March, 2011, just in time for the start of the next growing season.

Different climates...different tragedies, yet both Pastor Julio and Pastor Blanca Irma (last week) share their faith in the Lord with their congregations without faltering. Each faces significant challenges in leading multiple congregations. They do this despite the minimal compensation available to them from the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. This is a poor church in a poor country with an overwhelmingly poor population. Many Salvadoran Lutheran pastors serve ostensibly as volunteers, engaged in a labor of love.

*Submitted by Rip from Grace ELCA in Thiensville, WI.
Grace and My Good Jesus are sister churches.*

Your gift to the Salvadoran Lutheran Church Pastors Endowment Fund will help to provide a sustainable source of salary support to Pastor Julio and the other clergy of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. For information about the fund or companion synod ministries with the Salvadoran Lutheran Church, email info@partnerswithelsalvador.org