

An Easter Church

After eleven years of partnering together, spending time in each other's communities, and generating long and short term ministry plans together, we built a church. It's a simple cement block structure, with a metal roof and metal shuttered windows. The children helped choose the paint colors; they decided on using the colors of an Easter sunrise-- lavender on the front and yellow on the sides.



The church construction teams were organized by women, and included some professionals, women, men and teens from the community. All were invited to help, even the gang members. This invitation was an act of grace, and recognition that the church

is built on holy ground – ground claimed with a simple cross and a humble tin structure thirteen years earlier, ground now re-claimed by an Easter Church with the original cross mounted on the roof.

The ministry which happens in this community is not easy. The streets have been periodically claimed by one gang, then another, dividing the community, endangering lives, taking lives. The darkness has brought fear. Even the pastor has been threatened. Violence has been real. Death has been real.

Yet in this place, death shall not have victory. The Gospel message of life in Jesus Christ is boldly and loudly proclaimed by the words and actions of a pastor who works to build community, who works to bring a message of courage and hope and joy and celebration to this community.

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Pastor Santiago trains and empowers lay leaders who are planting seeds throughout the community. Small groups of 12-15 women meet in homes. The youth group grew large,



and now has 5 smaller groups of 10-15 meeting in homes and being led by older youth leaders with

adult mentors. The men's group has blossomed into a support for fathers and an action group which plans events for children. The community is forging connections with social action groups, local government and nearby communities to combat violence. We recently received this message:



Things are going really well right now. Thanks be to God there is no violence in the community...the men are planning a soccer tournament for the youth, the older youth are teaming up with the Red Cross, the local government, the national government and the women's groups to celebrate the Day of the Child with 350 boys and girls...

The hope and resurrection in this community is made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit and the dedicated efforts of a very special pastor.

Submitted by Linda from St. John's ELCA in Brookfield, WI. St. John's and Heroes of the Faith 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 Santiago and the other clergy of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. For more information about the fund or companion synod ministries with the Salvadoran Lutheran Church, email info@partnerswithelsalvador.org