



The Zirkel Family

Serving the Methodist Church in San Jose, Costa Rica

March 2023

Dear Friends and Family,

We pray this letter finds each of doing well and enjoying all that is ours through Christ Jesus. With Covid behind us (mostly) and with many of us establishing a new normal for our lives; we look to the future with great hope and expectation. We're off to a good beginning; the first quarter of the year has been filled with ministry and blessings. We would love to share a bit of it with you.

The children at the Home. We began the new year with 26 children. Fourteen boys and twelve girls. And we have just received a 16-day old baby girl. Both homes are full! If we had more beds, we could easily fill them. During the past 7 months we have received calls from the government for 146 children needing a safe place to live. We hope to begin construction on two additional homes (a duplex) in the not-too-distant future.

The new school year. In February, the new school year began! This year, for the first time, we have six teens in high school. They are attending a private technical school close to the Children's Home. There are 16 children attending the school at the Home (preschool through 6 grade). A new addition to our school this year is a library and computer center. We are grateful to the family who made the new addition possible.



The Methodist School. Youth groups from First Methodist Waco, The Woodlands Methodist Church, Houston, and a college team from Baylor Wesley Foundation, spent their Spring Break with us. The teams led chapel services and visited classes at the school. This past week, seniors from the Methodist high school joined the youth team at the Children's Home for a combined "mission project". We are so grateful for these young people's energy and commitment to Christ and for their witness to the students and faculty at the Colegio Metodista. Thank you, students!



The Methodist Seminary. The seminary began the year teaching online. However, this past week the seminary held its first in person class and welcomed Dr. Chris Kiesling and Dr. Steve Gober from Asbury Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky. The focus for the week was Discipleship. The week concluded with an ordination service for the church's recently approved ministerial candidates. Please pray that the Lord will continue to bless these men and women as they respond to God's call on their lives.



The Wesley Medical Clinic. During February, we held our first health fair for 2023 at the Wesley Clinic in Puerto Viejo. A team of physicians and several assistants from First Methodist Waco served 200+ patients over the weekend. It's our hope that the medical clinic will open on a regular basis this year in order to meet the growing needs of the underserved community in the Puerto Viejo area.



Church Growth. Two- and one-half years later (after closure for Covid) all of our churches are open and are growing. We currently are working on a new sanctuary in the port city of Limon; a sanctuary in Guapiles; plus, Sunday School classes and a multi-purpose building in El Tigre. We are delighted that mission teams have begun returning to work with the church. We hope to welcome many more in the coming months.

Our family. Sarah and Emma continue to study at Baylor; both are doing well and making plans for summer internships. Ray and I are in our 29th year of ministry with the church and look toward the future with great anticipation for all that is still to come! Please pray with us for God to meet our needs for our ministry and our family. Thank you all for your continued love and support. We are most grateful,

Ray and Lidia Zirkel