



The Zirkel Family

Serving the Methodist Church in San Jose, Costa Rica

April 15, 2021

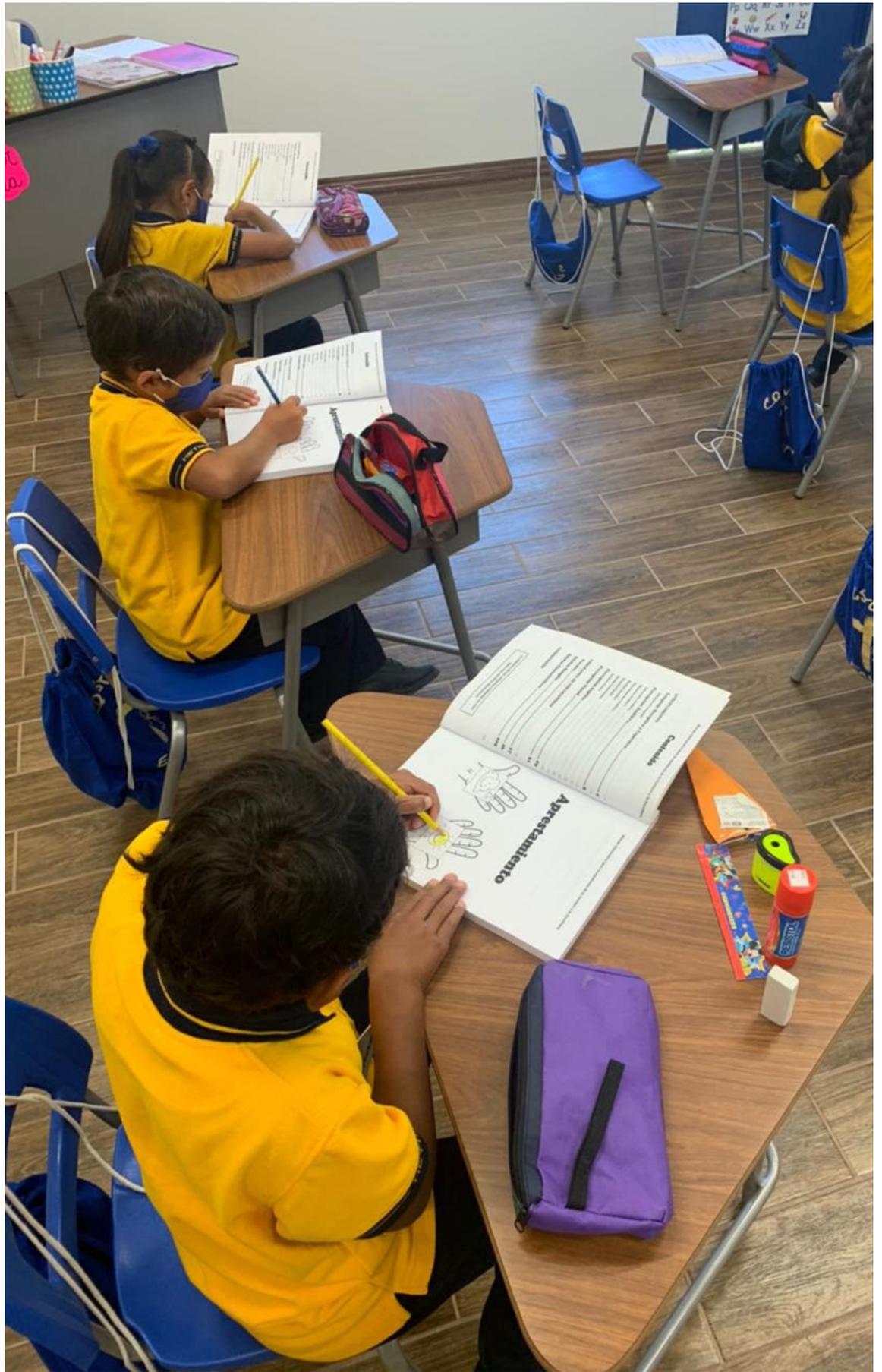
Dear Partners in Ministry,

We pray you are well and looking forward to a beautiful Summer. We had hoped that this Summer were going to be filled with you and your churches coming to Costa Rica to minister with us. It's hard to believe we will not be receiving mission teams for a second year. We were just beginning to think it might be possible to receive teams this Fall. However, the virus is once again raising its ugly head. The medical workers and a small percentage of the older population have not been vaccinated in Costa Rica. Yet, at this time there is a lack of access to the vaccine. So, we wait and long for the day we are together again. Below is a brief glimpse into the past few weeks. We hope you'll enjoy catching up with us.

The Methodist Children's Home: Our homes are full. During February we received a sweet sibling group, a little girl 5 and her little brother 3. We now have 24 children ranging in age from 1 to 15 years old. The children are thriving and well and continue to surprise us with their ability to adapt to our changing circumstances. We have recently resumed their medical and dental appointments. Before Easter, a stomach virus spread among the children resulting in two of our younger boys being admitted to the hospital. Thankfully, after several courses of antibiotics we were finally free of the stomach bug.



The School at the Children's Home (Escuela Metodista): We have completed our first week of tests! Watching the children's self-esteem they progress in school is a tremendous blessing. Each Monday we have an assembly in which the children assume leadership roles. Seeing them stand and speak in front of others, sing the national anthem, read Scripture,



The Methodist School (Sabanilla) The school year has gotten off to start. The first few weeks were a little rocky as everyone at the Metho

The Methodist Churches: Many of our rural churches were able to hold Sunday services and plan to remain open while following Covid protocols. Several San Jose congregations have also returned to in person gatherings while maintaining an online presence for those who are unable to attend. Continued prayers for these congregations, their pastors and leaders are appreciated.

Family news. Sarah will be graduating from Baylor in May. (Yes, it has been 4 years.) Ray and I will be traveling to her graduation and seek your prayers for our health and safety. Both Sarah and Emma will be interning this summer at hospitals in Texas and then spending the latter part of the summer at home. In August, both girls will return to Waco. Emma will begin her senior year studying neuroscience and Spanish, and Sarah is currently making applications for graduate school at Baylor.

Ray is just a few short months from completing his thesis for his doctorate. Everything was pushed back a bit with the pandemic, but he is planning to submit his paper in early Fall. Two weeks ago, the Methodist Church in Costa Rica held an abbreviated session of its annual conference. (Originally scheduled for Dec. of 2020.) Among the highlights were: the reelection of Luis Palomo as Bishop, Lidia was appointed to the Board of Directors of Methodist School, and Ray was elected president of the Board once again.



videos, attend virtual gatherings, anything you may need to enable your congregation to remain engaged with the Methodist Church in Costa Rica. Please just let us know how we can help! Finally, we plan to post more updates on social media. So, please follow us on Facebook (The Methodist Home of Costa Rica) and on Instagram. You can always reach us by email: ray.zirkel@gmail.com and ljzirkel@gmail.com.

God's richest blessings to each of you,

Ray and Lidia Zirkel

 **The Methodist Children's Home of Costa Rica**  **hogarmetodista.cr**

 **COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS**

Financial gifts for the Children's Home can be made at:
Communities Foundation of Texas
ChildrensHomesSupport.com

 **Financial Gifts for our personal support:**
FUMC, Outreach Committee-Zirkel Support
301 North High Street
Uvalde, TX 78801