

El Salvador Mission Handbook

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CONTENTS

Who we are	1
Welcome	2
Reason for Missions	
El Salvador	3
Getting Here	
Housing	
Money and Your Health	4
Costs	5
Funds	
Day Off	
Schedule	6
Helpful Info	
Projects	7
Packing List	9
Final Thoughts	
Other Info	10



2017

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Brian and Ellyn Dubberly



Brian and Ellyn are members of First United Methodist Church in Rocky Mount North Carolina. Brian's first visit to Central America was in 1996 while attending Appalachian State University, where he spent the summer in a sustainable development work-study internship. Brian started Salvadoran

Mission Projects in the spring of 2010 to help with the El Salvadoran Church's mission and to grow the community of faith through partnerships with churches in the United States. He is an United Methodist Volunteers in Mission long term individual volunteer and a North Carolina conference missionary. Ellyn is a missionary with the

General Board of Global Ministries serving the Methodist Church in El Salvador in the area of Christian Education. She is Currently developing and writing Sunday School Curriculum that will be used by all of the Methodist Churches in El Salvador. She also teaches English at the Methodist School.

Rev. Juan de Dios Peña



Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

-Colossians 3:23-24

Juan de Dios was born in the city of Ahuachapan, El Salvador and grew up in a Christian family. In January of 2004 he became the part-time coordinator of Volunteers in Mission for the Methodist Church in El Salvador. In December 2005 he left his job working as a financial officer for the

city of Ahuachapan to be the coordinator for Volunteers in Mission full-time. In 2007 Juan de Dios was elected as the president of the Methodist Church in El Salvador while continuing to host national and international mission teams. In February 2012 he became one of

two ordained pastors in El Salvador. Juan de Dios has a yearning to help people in need and to project the church in El Salvador as the middle of spiritual salvation while relieving others of hunger, misery, poverty, illiteracy, and the marginalization of so many wrongs that greatly affect the people of El Salvador.

The Evangelical Methodist Church in El Salvador

The Evangelical Methodist Church in El Salvador is an autonomous Methodist Church founded 23 years ago. While not a United Methodist Church they are in connection with the

Methodist Church as a whole. Currently all of the Methodist churches in El Salvador are in the Central and Western portion of the country. There are five churches in

Ahuachapan, and one each in; Santa Ana, Coatepeque, Cuidad Real, Zacamil, Los Horcones, San Lorenzo and Soyapango.

Welcome - Bienvenido

We are really excited that your mission team will be partnering with Salvadoran Mission Projects and the Methodist Church in El Salvador. We hope that this handbook will help you with the planning and organizational needs associated with bringing a team to work with us in El Salvador. Enclosed you will find the answers to a

number of questions that most team leaders encounter, as well as costs, typical schedules and required documentation. We, of course, cannot include the answers to every question that might arise but hope this will get you started and be a point of reference. Both Juan de Dios and I are always available to help in any way that we are able.

We look forward to building a lasting relationship between your group and the people and church in El Salvador. Blessings!

Brian Dubberly

Missionary Salvadoran Mission Projects

Rev. Juan de Dios Peña

President Evangelical Methodist Church in El Salvador

Social Reasons for Doing Mission Work in El Salvador

El Salvador has suffered from a tremendous resource drain caused by the country's civil war (1980-1992), natural disasters, and a lack of economic development. El Salvador's primary export and cash crop, coffee, was seriously affected by the Civil War and by the drop in world coffee prices. Hurricane Mitch hit El Salvador in late October 1998,

generating extreme rainfall of which caused widespread flooding and landslides. Roughly 250 square miles were flooded, and 374 people were either killed or missing. Reconstruction from Mitch was still underway when in January and February 2001 the country experienced two devastating earthquakes that left nearly 2,000 people dead or missing, 8,000 injured, and caused severe dislocations across every department of

El Salvador. Nearly 25% of all private homes in the country were either destroyed or badly damaged, and 1.5 million persons were left without housing. High levels of unemployment and the privatization of many public services such as health and education have contributed to economic hardships. Nearly one quarter of El Salvadorans live on less than \$1 per day and over half live on less than \$2 per day.

How God Calls us to do Mission Work in El Salvador

You can find an abundance of scriptures concerning missions and serving those in need. At the center of this is of course is the great commission found in the final chapter of the gospel of Matthew. One of my favorite verses is from Paul's letter to Philippi, the second chapter verses 1-4 (MSG): "If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of

the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care - then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front, don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting you own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand." As a member of a short

term mission group we feel that it is important that before you come you spend time praying and studying your personal meaning of Christian service. We think this will make a significant difference in your mission experience here in El Salvador as well as your faith walk in general.

Is El Salvador Safe?



Violence directed towards tourists is very rare. However, El Salvador has been classified as one of the most violent countries in Latin America. Levels of violence in large cities is high, particularly amongst young people who have few

opportunities for employment and are drawn into local gangs. We only allow teams to work in places that we are familiar with and that we feel are safe. It is still a good idea, as it is whenever you are in an unfamiliar place,

to stay aware of your surroundings and be discreet when out and about. **Your safety is our top priority** and while we cannot make any promises or guarantees, we will do our very best to make sure that while you are in El Salvador that your work team is as safe and comfortable as possible.

When Jesus had called the twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out demons and cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Luke 9:1-2

How Do We Get To El Salvador?

El Salvador's International airport is Comalapa International (SAL) and is about 40 kilometers outside of San Salvador. At immigration you must purchase a \$10 single

entry tourist card. There is a departure tax but it is almost always included in the price of your airline ticket (please check with your air carrier if you are unsure). Once

out of the airport in El Salvador we will take care of your transportation. If you are working in Ahuachapan, the trip is about two hours by bus.

Where Do We Stay In El Salvador?



The church in El Salvador owns a home in which we use to host teams called the Mission Residence and we can accommodate most sized teams there. The cost for staying here is \$47

per day per person (including the day you arrive and leave) which covers food lodging and transportation. Additionally your team has the option to stay at a local hotel that we

have a relationship with. El Altillo located in Ahuachapan is \$55 per day per person. Once we have you on the calendar we can discuss your team's lodging.

What Kind Of Money Is Used In El Salvador?

In January 2001, El Salvador adopted the US dollar as their official currency, a change known as dolarizacion. The El Salvadoran Colon is no longer used but remains the national currency. We do not suggest that you carry a large amount of cash with you. ATMs are readily

available and larger establishments will accept credit cards. Be sure to tell your financial institutions that you will be using your card overseas so that they do not block your charges to prevent fraud or theft. It is a good idea to check with your bank to see if there are fees for foreign withdrawals as some

banks charge rather large fees for this type of transaction. When bringing cash it is a good idea to bring bills that are \$20 or smaller and in good shape. Throughout Central America there are problems with counterfeit \$100 bills so it a good idea to leave them at home.

Shots, Medicines & Your Health

We recommend that you see your personal doctor prior to coming on your mission trip. You and your physician can decide what is best for your physical health and what vaccinations and medicines you will need for your mission experience.

The CDC classifies several parts of El Salvador as a malaria risk. If you and your doctor feel it necessary to take medical precautions, then by all means do so. However, we have never had a problem with malaria.

If you take daily medications please make sure that you bring enough for the duration of trip.

The water in El Salvador is not safe for consumption by your mission team, so anything liquid that goes into your mouth needs to come from a bottle. We will make sure you have safe drinking water. Staying hydrated will make a huge

difference on how you feel each day.

To cut down on plastic bottles and costs please ask each team member to bring a refillable water bottle.

Alcohol based hand sanitizers are a good idea but remember they do not kill everything and certainly do not replace soap and water. Make sure you purchase a quality sanitizer that has a minimum of 60% alcohol.

If for some reason you do get ill while in El Salvador the Methodist Church maintains a clinic with a full time doctor. Private professional medical care and medicines are readily available to us. We understand that some medical problems can be embarrassing, this is part of our lives here and the sooner we know you are having trouble the sooner we can help you get back on your feet and healthy.



Zika Chikunguya and Dengue!

Like every country in Central America we have been affected by mosquito born viruses. The mosquito that carries the viruses is one that is active during the day.

Being vigilant about applying insect repellent is your best protection from these viruses.

How Much Does It Cost To Bring A Team



We are intimately linked in this harvest work. Anyone who accepts what you do, accepts me, the One who sent you. Anyone who accepts what I do Accepts my Father, who sent me.
Matthew 10:40



The cost to bring a team to El Salvador will vary depending on the project(s) that your team will be participating in while here and where you choose to stay. Likewise the location of the project will also have some varying impact on the costs. If your team works in Ahuachapan the cost for food, lodging, and transportation will be between \$47 and \$55 per person, per day. In addition we request that each team also bring \$400 for coordination consideration to cover

expenses associated with hosting your team. The costs for each project is as follows:

Home Building Project
\$5300

Church Construction
\$4000

(includes materials and local professional labor)

Food Distribution
\$1000

Teams doing Bible School have no in country costs but teams are responsible for

bringing their own materials. If translators are needed the cost is \$15 per day per translator.

If your team is working in San Salvador we can provide a couple options to try to work within your budget.

Each mission team's cost will vary depending on projects, location, plane tickets, and the number of team members. Once we know you are coming, what you will be doing and staying we can give you a better idea of the cost.

How Do We Get Our Funds To You?

Due to a change in El Salvador's banking and money laundering laws we are no longer able to deposit team funds in the Church's bank account in the US, so all team expenses must be brought in cash (large bills are fine). We understand some team's reservation in carrying cash but we have investigated

other means and bringing cash is the only feasible option at this time. Remember that if you are in possession of more than \$10,000 it must be declared in customs. You can avoid this by splitting the funds between several team members. We will of course will provide you with a receipt and if you need us to send an invoice to

your financial administrator prior to funds being released please let us know.

Additionally meals in transit, teams that wish to stop for a meal when they arrive and/or depart, will be at the expense of the team and is not figured in the food, lodging and transportation expenses.

Day Off Options

Teams working in Ahuachapan generally spend one day on the Rutas de las Floras (the Blue Ridge Parkway of El Salvador). We make two stops in the towns of Concepcion de Ataco

to do some shopping and Apaneca for lunch. In addition the Mayan ruin of Tazamal is a short drive away. There are also options in San Salvador (additional cost may apply) such as the

volcano park El Boquerón, the Oscar Romero chapel and museum. El Salvador is a wonderful country full of culture and we will work with your team leader to plan your group's day off.

Your Typical Workday Schedule

Please keep in mind that culturally time and punctuality are different in Central America than in the United States. If you are one who watches your wristwatch you may want to consider leaving it at home. That being said, we will do our best to keep to some type of general schedule.

- 7 am Breakfast
- 8 am Go to worksite
- 1 pm Lunch
- 4 pm End of work day
- 6 pm Dinner

This is very general agenda for our typical work day. We are very flexible and can accommodate most of your teams requests. We are by no means slave drivers and want your team to experience and enjoy both the people and culture of El Salvador. Building relationships is an important part of our ministry. We encourage each group to get to know the workers, families, children, church members, patients, etc. while you are here.

Some Things To Keep In Mind

While we encourage building relationships we must insist that you do not give monetary gifts to anyone. We do not want to build the expectation or dependency that mission teams are cash cows. Likewise, this goes for giving money to individual churches or pastors. You are, of course, welcome to give during the offering.

If you or your group wants to do anything extra for a particular church we ask that you go through the conference. Because of safety concerns we are not able to take teams to all of our churches. Giving money directly to one church or one pastor gives the appearance of favoritism and is divisive for the church as a whole.

Alcohol is a serious social problem throughout Latin America. **Most denominations abstain from consuming alcohol as a result we ask that you respect the church and the culture in El Salvador and abstain from drinking for the duration of your mission trip.** Seeing or hearing about team members drinking can be confusing, so again please be prepared to not consume alcohol while in El Salvador.

Helpful Information

You may want to familiarize yourself with some Spanish vocabulary and phrases prior to coming to El Salvador. I recommend Spanishdict.com and the app [Doulingo](https://doulingo.com). Both are free and fun.

Because we are always on the move the best way to contact us is via email, but please allow us a couple of days to get back to you.

We provide a prepaid cell phone to each group so you can make or receive phone calls. Your team is responsible for the cost and calls to the US are about \$0.18 per minute.

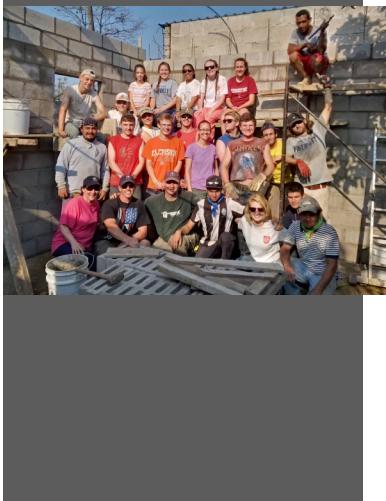


Church Construction Projects

We always enjoy new construction at churches whether it is an expansion or building the primary church space itself. All of our building projects are built with concrete block. Currently we are building at two church sites. We ask each team to budget \$4000 to work on church construction projects.

1. The first is at Vida Nueva in San Salvador. We are reconstructing the church and have plans to erect a two story building that will house both a clinic and the church facility.

2. The second is at La Gloria in Ahuachapan. This is a new construction that will include a Sanctuary, Sunday School classrooms and a Parsonage.



We construct simple homes of concrete block for families that own their own property but live in substandard housing. The houses we build are 36 square meters

and are from a government approved plan. Houses are built for both church members and non members. There is a review process to ensure that the family receiving the

house cannot obtain a home through any other means. The cost to build a home with us is \$5300 which covers the costs of materials and local professional labor.



Bible School

There is no shortage of children in El Salvador, and they are an important part of our ministry. All teams are

welcome to do Bible School while working in El Salvador. Children go to school half days (either in the morning or the afternoon) so

anytime of the year is an ideal time for Bible School. Teams will need to provide their own materials and Supplies.

Medical Teams



The Methodist Church in El Salvador maintains a full time, low cost medical clinic in Ahuachapan. We welcome financial support to help with this ministry for the purchase of medicine and salaries.

We also host medical mission teams. We arrange for medical teams to set up clinics in impoverished communities where people have little to no access to medical care. Mission teams provide free services as well as dispensing medicine. Medical mission teams are responsible for

providing their own supplies and medicines. There are customs and tax forms and fees that must be filed and approved prior to you entering El Salvador with medicines. Please contact us at least six months prior to traveling to El Salvador so that we can ensure that the medicine you bring will be allowed into the country. Additionally if your team will need translators the cost is \$15 per day per translator.

So they set out and went from village to village proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

Luke 9:6

Food Distribution And Evangelism

We will purchase bulk staple foods, and your team will repack the food into individual bags for distribution. We take small groups into either the community that you are working in or another community that we are familiar with. Typically we go with the pastor or lay leader of the local

Methodist church. The church leader will take your team members to families that have been identified as in need. We take time to talk with the family so that your group members will have the opportunity to understand daily life and struggles of the particular family. We take time to pray with the family and if

they are not attending a church, tell them about the Methodist Church. While the food is needed and appreciated it is the compassion and prayer that is central. It also opens the door for a pastoral visit from the local pastor or church leader. The cost to participate in this program is \$1000.

Suggested Packing List

- ◊ Work Clothes
- ◊ Toiletries and Medicines
- ◊ Church Clothes (Men typically wear pants, women wear skirts or pants)
- ◊ Sunscreen and a Hat
- ◊ Shoes: work (closed toe), non work and shower
- ◊ Work Gloves
- ◊ Bible
- ◊ Book or Music for free time
- ◊ Pen and notebook to journal
- ◊ Neosporin and Band-Aids
- ◊ Pain Reliever
- ◊ Hand Sanitizer and/or wipes
- ◊ Travel Pack Tissue (not all public bathrooms will have paper)
- ◊ Water bottle
- ◊ Sunglasses
- ◊ Eye drops (especially contact wearers)
- ◊ Ziploc bags (pack any liquids in plastic bags or your clothes may be covered in shampoo when you arrive)
- ◊ Camera and Batteries
- ◊ Bug Spray

Travel Tips

- It is a good idea to take a change of clothes, medicines and carry some personal items with you in your carry on bag just in case your luggage does not arrive when you do.
- Remember to save space in your suitcase for souvenirs and coffee.
- If you have something special or sentimental that you can not live without it is probably best to leave it at home.

A Few Final Thoughts

- Prepare to expect the unexpected
- Things don't always go the way that we want them to go, but they always go the way God wants them to go.
- Don't forget to pack your flexibility with you. The first commandment of VIM work is to be flexible as to not get bent out of shape.
- Mission teams are only as strong as the people on them.
- The effectiveness of the trip depends on PRAYER and YOU! Have faith that God can make the impossible happen.
- Be patient with the people on your team. Everyone has personality habits that are annoying—INCLUDING YOU!
- Being is more important than doing on a mission trip. Be open to hear what God is saying to you
- on this trip. During this time you will be free from the everyday distractions that fill your life. God speaks loudest when we are free from distractions.

UMVIM Registration and Insurance

We strongly encourage and recommend that each mission team to both register and get insurance through UMVIM managed by the Southeast Jurisdiction. Insurance and registration is now done online through the Southeast Jurisdiction. In addition we recommend that the mission group leader attend UMVIM Team Leader Training, we find that it makes a significant difference in the experience of your mission trip. It is also a good idea to register your team with the US Embassy here in El Salvador through the State Department's website. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us or the UMVIM office in your jurisdiction.

While we recommend that you register and get your insurance through UMVIM, we must insist that you have travel insurance of some kind that covers each of your team members for the duration of their time in El Salvador. It is unlikely that you will ever need to use the insurance, if there is an accident and you are not insured there is little that we will be able to do to help in this situation. Again please make sure that each member on your team has adequate emergency medical insurance that will cover them during their time in El Salvador

Safe Sanctuary Policy

Each team must comply to their conference's Safe Sanctuary Policy. Team Leaders should check with their Conference UMVIM Coordinator for specific policies, requirements or expectations related to Safe Sanctuary/Child Protection Policies, background checks and insurance prior to registration on the UMVIM, SEJ site. If you have any questions, please contact your Conference UMVIM Coordinator or Conference Office. If your conference does not have a Safe Sanctuary Policy UMVIM has created a general one that can be found and downloaded at UMVIM.org.

Refund Policy

Because we make arrangements for your team prior to your arrival, we will happily refund food, lodging and transportation costs for any team member that needs to drop out for personal reasons up to 30 days prior to your arrival. If the cancellation is made with less than 30 days of your team's arrival we will refund 50% of the costs.

Notes &
Questions for Brian and Juan de Dios: