

## **NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARY PARTNERS.**

Thank you to Danny Cross for seeking and sharing these connections.

### ***MARK HARE AND JENNY BENT IN COSTA RICA***

Costa Rica is holding its own so far. The average new cases per day is something between 5 and 10. After almost three months, there are still only 903 confirmed cases, with over 14,000 people tested. Ten people have lost their lives to COVID here.

For most of these last two and a half months we have been doing as most folks in the US--mostly staying at home and acting as full/-time assistant teachers for Keila (10) and Annika (8) with their online schooling. Little by little we are discovering ways to also re-integrate more fully into our work responsibilities. We have an online questionnaire that is almost ready to go out to members of the Latin American Biblical University (UBL). We'll be asking them about their perspective on green initiative that the university has been carrying out for two years now--the gardening, solar panels, paper-saving, recycling and other aspects of becoming a ecologically sustainable university.

I have also been working in the garden at the university. Three weeks ago I had the pleasure of going with one of the workers to collect horse manure. There is nothing quite so satisfying for a gardener-person as piling up good quality rotted manure. Last week I worked with one of the resident students weeding the six garden beds, maintaining proper social distancing, which isn't too hard when you are outside.

I am also working on getting some mapping materials put together so that we can initiate a community mapping of the UBL grounds, which are over two acres. The goal will be to create, together, an integrated management that minimizes the loss of rainwater from runoff, maximizes production and in general increases the beauty and the wildness of this small part of God's creation.

On the other hand, we are also dealing with tragedy in Jenny's family in Nicaragua. Jenny's father fell ill with what appears to have been COVID-19. He was hospitalized a week ago and seemed to be stabilizing on Saturday, but suddenly passed away very early Sunday morning. He had to be buried almost immediately, and of course there was no way for Jenny to get home. Nor could her two older brothers who live in the States get back.

Your prayers for Jenny's mother, Modestina, who is still probably fighting off what is probably a COVID infection. Jenny's sister, Hypatia and two members of their extended family are doing all they can to keep going, fighting grief as well as the virus. Prayers for them would also be appreciated as well as for all of the people

in Nicaragua and everywhere in the world where normal people are suffering from poor decisions by incompetent or corrupt leaders.

Let us know how we can pray for you all as well. How is Oxford worshiping now??

Many many blessings,  
Mark, Keila, Annika and Jenny

### **SARAH HENEKEN IN COLOMBIA**

Thank you for writing! I am doing pretty well, all things considered. I'm sort of a home body so it isn't too hard for me to shelter in place, and I have some really good neighbors around me, we've been more connected these days so that is a bonus. I've been catching up on some newsletter writing and other projects I can do from home, and working on some personal projects around the edges that keep me motivated, learning to play guitar and bake sourdough bread, and doing a little sewing.

Infections have begun to increase pretty rapidly in the Atlántico province so that is a prayer concern. Many of the residents of the most marginalized parts of the metropolitan area around Barranquilla have disregarded the social distancing measures, which honestly I find both horrifying and understandable. The most impoverished folks live in cramped quarters, sometimes with multiple family groups in a single dwelling, and the weather has been increasingly hot and humid as we enter the rainy season. Water service can be unreliable, too, which makes things all the more complicated. So far Colombia has not suffered as terribly as some communities in Ecuador, Brazil, but we are far from in the clear. Of particular concern are a number of indigenous communities where infections have been growing in various parts of South America. Not as scandalous as the effects on the Navajo nation so far, but worrisome indeed.

The churches here in Barranquilla are all doing what they can to provide for members and neighbors in need. I know we all covet your prayers, and remember you in ours!

Please let me know if I can support you all in any way, or perhaps join you in worship sometime. I'm available to preach or provide other liturgical support if that's of interest to you all.

In prayerful hope,  
Sarah

