



Would I Be Enough?

Guatemala and the Holly Wreath Legend

By Margie Vockell, Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church (Austin)

mvockell@gmail.com

Once I had the dates and my airline tickets for my mission trip to Guatemala, the realization set in that I was going all by myself. I would not have the team from Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church (SHPC) to accompany me and make it into an extraordinary mission trip like they had done the previous four trips. The excitement of going was replaced with worry and doubt. What would my time there look like from December 10th-15th? **Would I be enough?**

Shepherd of the Hills usually has a group of 30-50 individuals that fly to Guatemala for various mission projects for one week each year. One team goes to several communities to bring clean water through our *Living Waters for the World* partnership. A second group goes to help at San Bartolomé

School. This school provides education, health, and nutrition to the children who attend the school. A third group goes to help at *Hogar Miguel Magone* and *Maria Auxiliadora Hogar*. Both of these places are homes that help the children that live there and the children in the surrounding village with their education, health, and nutrition needs. At the children's homes, we are doing different labor-intensive work, painting, making repairs, holding Bible Study, doing arts and crafts, playing games, and of course, we have some amazing soccer scrimmages. Our fourth mission group consists of doctors that lead Helping Babies Breathe training classes to midwives and nurses to save a newborn's life after birth.



However, the most important job is building relationships and being the mouth, hands, and feet of Jesus. We leave at the tail end of the week to go to Antigua to meet up with our other service teams to debrief and share our incredible transformative experiences that we were blessed to be a part of during our time working alongside our friends in Guatemala.

On my first mission trip to Guatemala, I helped out with the two children's

homes. I fell in love with everyone there and wanted to support Karen Rodas and Estuardo Reynoso, the directors of *Hogar Miguel Magone* and *Maria Auxiliadora Hogar*. Their unbelievable work involves giving the children a safe place to live, food, and clothing, but also tends to their medical and psychological needs, as well as giving the children life skills training, music lessons, and trade skills. Most of the children at these two homes are there because of poverty or abuse

(physical or sexual). I have heard some of the saddest stories while I have been there; however, when you see these children you simply see joy, love, and unshakeable faith in God.

In December 2019, I received a tremendous amount of support from my church family, friends, and family with prayers, monetary donations, arts & crafts materials, and other supplies. I was still worried about **if I would be enough** to make a difference and make it special.

Thus, I set out for my adventure and to say the visit was amazing would be an understatement. This mission trip was a true Christmas gift for me. The gift started with an amazing



welcome at the airport with Karen, Estuardo and two boys I have grown close to, Franklin and Johnny. My family began sponsoring Johnny the first year we went and Franklin has become a part of our family. A piece of my heart resides in Guatemala because of these two boys. The kids and I participated in numerous activities, games, and crafts. Young Rembrandts donated art supplies for all the kids there and I held several art drawing classes. I was treated to several musical concerts by the kids, a trip to the zoo, and sharing meals with the kids and staff. On my

last night there, we enjoyed watching *The Last Jedi* Star Wars movie and eating s'mores.

The care and hospitality that my hosts showed me is something that I will not be able to repay. I got to enjoy the true spirit of Christmas with fellowship, meals, music, holiday festivities, and faith. I will never forget this Christmas.

I got my answer to my question **whether I was enough** when Karen took me to the airport and before saying goodbye

until next July. Karen handed me this beautiful bracelet with green beads with red dots along with the story of the Holly Wreath Legend,

“Legend tells of an orphan boy living with shepherds when the angels announced Christ’s birth. He wove a wreath of holly for the child’s head but seeing what a poor gift it was, began to cry. Jesus then reached out and touched the wreath, it began to sparkle and the boy’s tears turned into the scarlet berries.”

I now know I did not travel alone because Jesus was flying and walking beside me the whole time. Therefore, the next time I begin to **worry about being enough** I will recall the time that Jesus took my wreath of holly and turned it into a beautiful wreath with scarlet berries. Will you allow Jesus to do the same in your life