



THE Alvarez FAMILY

Hello from Belize!

January 2024

The weather here has made it seem a little bit like winter. Our evening temperatures have gone down to 50 degrees! This is a bit unusual for us. We have enjoyed the cooler weather and the crisp holiday feeling in the air.

In November, we had a special *Acción de Gracias* service. This is simply a Thanksgiving service where the members bring a basket of fruits and vegetables, cakes, or other baked goods as an offering of thanksgiving to God for His goodness. The baskets are then sold and the money used to buy something the church needs. We also take the best baskets to elderly people who need encouragement. A few visitors attended this special service, and one of those families has been attending regularly ever since.

December is one of the busiest months here at Amazing Grace Baptist Church. Not only do we have a special Christmas party for the children, but we also have a ladies' dinner, a youth banquet, and several Christmas activities for the neighborhood children.

At our church-wide Christmas dinner, we always give a gift to each child. This year, the Foundations Sunday School Class at First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, provided the gifts. We are so thankful for their giving spirit. Because of their generosity, our entire church enjoyed a Christmas meal together as well.

Our children's feeding program also had a special Christmas activity for these kids. Their gifts were provided by an organization called Children's Cup. What a joy it is to know that the children of Belize are loved and cared for by not only our church here but also by many others across the world. We are thankful to be a channel for God's blessings to these children.

Our church theme for this year is "Faith and Family." God has laid on our hearts the desire to focus teaching this year on marriage, child rearing, and the family unit. The core family is the strength of any church and society. How we desire to see our church families draw closer to the Lord! We ask you to pray with us that God would move in the hearts of all of our church families, but especially in the hearts of our men.

In these past few months, we have had about 30 visitors, have seen over 50 people saved, and have had many baptisms. Many visitors have stayed in church, for which we rejoice. We also added another bus this year to bring more people to church.

We do have a special prayer request. Here in Belize, secondary education (high school) is not funded. Parents have to pay to send their children to school. We have several young people who finish compulsory school (eighth-grade equivalent) but are unable to attend high school due to finances. A year of high school is between US\$400 – \$500. We are looking for a donor who would like to sponsor a child for a year of high school. It is our desire to do a scholarship program where the student would help at church in return for being sponsored. This need has been quite prevalent recently. Please pray that our Lord would direct the step with this project and send donors to fill this need.

Our family is doing quite well. Tonya recently started a women's Sunday school class. She has enjoyed preparing the lessons and teaching the women. The children are chugging along nicely for the school year. We recently added rooms to our home. Our Alyssa, who is in ninth grade, is overjoyed to have her own space to study. Isabella and Analea share a bedroom and have enjoyed decorating and fighting! (HA!) Our little Timothy, age four, is a busy preschooler who loves to chase the chickens, climb trees, catch frogs, and play with trucks.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. The New Year is always exciting. It is an opportunity to do better and do more. God bless you.

In Christ,

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