



CHRISTMAS EVE AT OUR SENDING CHURCH, FBC GROVE CITY

Familia Gomez to Mexico "ABC's of Furlough"

Jan-Feb 2018

ABC's of Furlough. Our kids are mastering their ABC's this year and we thought it might be fun to give you a glimpse of our life...

A is for Available

We make ourselves available to meet with churches & individuals to share about the ministry. We are available to help with local church & supporting church's ministry events.

B is for Busy

We have times that are intensely busy and times that are incredibly quiet. It is a weird mix after being always BUSY in Mexico.

C is for Change

Change of climate, change of people, change of ministry focus this year, change of diet....furlough=change!

D is for Different

Our kids continue to point out all the differences: meal times, church service order, dress, snow vs warmth, spicy vs. bland, warm culture vs colder culture.

E is for Exciting

Most families don't get to travel and experience life in this way. It is exciting!

F is for Future Plans

Furlough is a time to reflect on last term and prepare for the future. What did we do well? What can we do better? What doors is God opening for the future? What is our plan for next term?

G is for Grandparents

If you ask our parents, they would define furlough by the importance of family time and cherished memories with Grandparents and loved ones.

H is for Home

Home? We're not sure how to define that anymore, but we know God has

always given us a warm, cozy spot to call home wherever He has us.

I is for Interesting

Every day brings new challenges, changes, and news. You never know what to expect and it is a time to fully surrender control to the Lord alone.

J is for Juxtaposed

Gomez' in the US? We don't fit here! It's the daily struggle. And yet, God brings countless beloved Latinos into our paths, even here in the US where we feel utterly juxtaposed.

K is for Kind

Kindness in our church family towards us cannot be described here. They made it possible for us to live here on not just bare minimums, but even with some of "the extras" we might have wanted.

L is for Listening

It's important we take time to listen to our each other and what we are processing; it's important we listen to our supporters and churches and help them understand their role in furlough and on-field ministry.

M is for MKs

Our kiddos! MKs never truly fit in either country, but come up with their own "third culture"—a mix of what seems familiar to them but often is totally weird to those around them in BOTH countries. Let's pray for them!

N is for Not Normal

We are anything but normal. Our new normal has to be redefined a lot.

O is for Outstanding

The LOVE, CARE & WELCOME we have received from our home church & supporting churches has been an outstanding display of Christ's love.

P is for Packing

By now we are experts!

Q is for Quiet Time

Would you believe that most missionaries struggle to keep a constant time set aside for Quiet devotional time with the Lord? We are not Super heroes. We are real people with real struggles.

R is for Rest

Some parts of furlough lack rest, other parts give us abundant rest.

S is for Sickness

Being in a new environment means we have had our share of sickness.

T is for Travels

We've logged 22,000 miles so far!

U is for Uneasy

Not knowing how to fit in and feeling uneasy, even with family & close friends are side effects of missionary life.

V is for Victory

Victory in Jesus! He alone is our victory!

W is for Wanting

Wanting and desiring to be back with our family in Christ in Mexico.

X is for X-rays

We've had two so far! For pneumonia in our kids. Well, what else starts with X?

Y is for Yearning

Yearning for fellowship with those we miss in Mexico, and for real tacos!!

Z is for Zealous

Let us never forget that even though our "mission field" is Mexico, it is also **Here**.

May we never grow weary of being zealous for Christ alone.

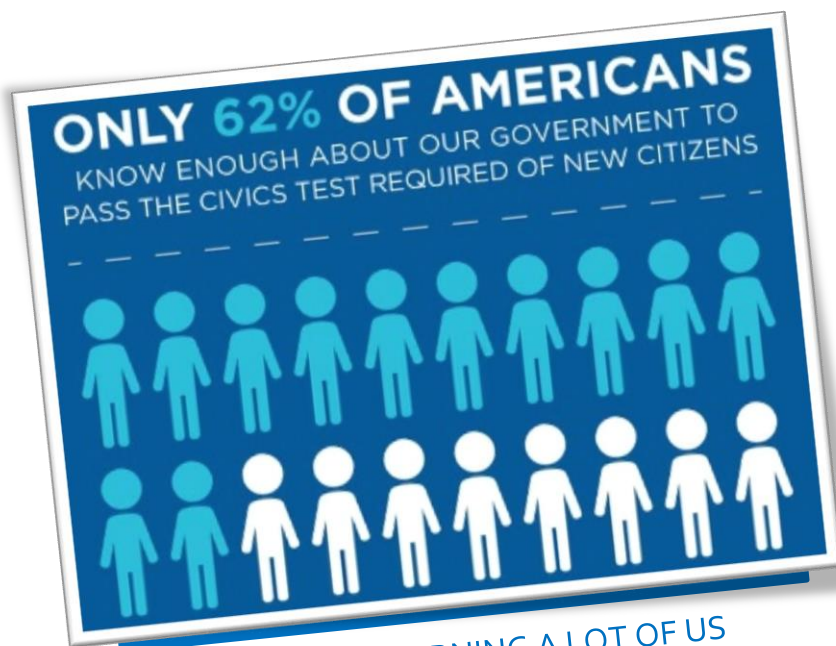
Citizenship Update

Where we are in this process and what is ahead!

When we arrived home to PA for furlough on March 2, 2017 we assumed it would be 6-8 months to apply for and obtain Kurt's citizenship. In June 2017, we learned that Kurt needed to have at least one uninterrupted year of residing continually in the US to meet citizenship requirements. Although he has had his green card "resident visa" for seven years, none of those years were without international travel, due to our position as career missionaries to Mexico. So our lawyer recommended we use March 2, 2017 to March 2, 2018 as our uninterrupted year. We applied for a furlough "extension" from ABWE, allowing us six additional months to finish the application process. So where are we now?



- ⇒ Feb 2018 we resent signed documents and pictures to our lawyer.
- ⇒ Kurt has been studying daily for his citizenship history, civics and geography exam, as well as studying his own application.
- ⇒ March 2, 2018 (in TWO WEEKS) the lawyer will officially submit the application to USCIS.
- ⇒ Online time tables for the Pittsburgh processing office show a wait of 5-8 months for citizenship. We ask you to FERVANTLY pray our application can go through in FIVE or less months.
- ⇒ Our furlough permission is currently only through September 2, 2018, so we really COVET your prayers for a speedy process with no more "snags."
- ⇒ After submission, we will wait for a BIOMETRICS appointment, then the date for CITIZENSHIP INTERVIEW AND CIVICS EXAM and then finally a date for OATH CEREMONY. Lastly, we will process Kurt's US passport. Once we have all our passports back in hand, we will seek to leave for our next term in Mexico.



BESIDES KURT LEARNING A LOT OF US HISTORY, BETHANY IS DISCOVERING SHE HAS FORGOTTEN SOME SINCE 8TH GRADE CIVICS!

WHY SEEK CITIZENSHIP?

Basically Kurt cannot CONTINUE to live abroad as a missionary with a US resident visa. He has been a resident visa holder for 7 years now, but in order to serve IN MEXICO without any visa issues in the future, citizenship is the best option. Also, it has always been a goal of his to obtain this, since we first applied for his residency when we married in 2009.



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Furlough Update

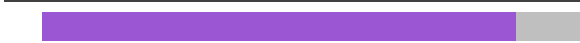
WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO...

1. Tyler and Olivia started winter soccer. We met one Mexican family through this league and are praying for a relationship to build and to invite them to our church's Good Friday evangelistic outreach. In addition there is another mom and her kids who Bethany befriended previously who also "just happen" to be on our kids' teams. Pray we can build these relationships.
2. We continue to help our sending church with their weekly Teens club. In March we will be totally revamping the Teens club and using a new Word of Life curriculum. It involves exciting studies, daily devotional help and accountability for the teens and us, small groups, and a structured approach. Pray for the orientation night March 3 and the big kick-off March 4. Also another couple from our home church will be stepping up to lead in this ministry too, with the goal of them leading when we depart for Mexico.
3. Tyler completed 100 days of Kindergarten and is very close to independent reading. He has grown by leaps and bounds academically and we love seeing all the verses he has put to memory at school, including the entire Psalm 23 this month.
4. Kurt attended the Word of Life training conference in Toledo, OH in January. We hope these tools help us serve in our sending church on furlough, but we know that they are also good tools to use when we return to Mexico. With WOL having an institute only 30 minutes from us in Mexico, we were already very familiar with this ministry.
5. In January, Bethany and Tyler made a solo trip to ABWE in Harrisburg. Tyler had academic testing done by a certified missionary who also has her doctorate in education. These exams helped us have a better panorama of how Tyler's mind works and in what areas he is excelling or lacking.
6. We've had a VERY snowy winter in PA and we are thankful we visited most of our supporting churches last fall. This winter, we have only had to visit two close by, and we have few more coming up in the spring.

Looking ahead:

- March 3-4: Teen Orientation night & kick off night at FBC Grove City
- March 2-3: Bethany speaking at ladies' retreat at Fellowship Baptist Church, Springfield, VA
- March 2: Citizenship case application submitted. Pray!!
- April 10-13: Kurt attending "Together for the Gospel" Conference in KY
- April 19-22: Ministering in Missions Conference in Scipio Baptist Church, Union Springs, NY
- April 24: Bethany speaking at Ladies' missionary day, Sharon Baptist Church, Sharon, PA

CURRENT SUPPORT LEVEL



96% LACKING \$360/MONTH

We have had many give LARGE one-time year end offerings to our account. THANK YOU! For those who choose to give this way, would you consider signing up as an official giving partner? You can still chose to send your gift in once per year, but instead this gift will count towards our monthly support need. For example, if you give a year end gift of \$600, that is really like signing up to give \$50 per month. You can still give it in one lump check. We will need to reach 100% support before