

## POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Our Sister Parish, Inc.  
P.O. Box 71632  
Clive, IA 50325  
oursisterparish.org

### DESIGNATED MISSION CO-WORKER IN EL SALVADOR

**Applications accepted until position is filled. To apply, please email a resume, cover letter, and three references with contact information to [osp@oursisterparish.org](mailto:osp@oursisterparish.org).**

**Employing Organization:** Our Sister Parish, 501(c)(3)

**Position to Be Filled:** Designated Mission Co-Worker in El Salvador

**Employment Status:** Full Time

**Annual Compensation:**

Salary	\$18,270
Medical/Pension/Life & Disability Ins.	<u>\$16,035</u>
TOTAL Mission Co-worker Compensation	\$34,305

**Language Requirements:** English and Spanish

**Position Location:**

The mission co-worker will live in the Pastoral House in Berlín, El Salvador. Berlín is located in the department of Usulután and is approximately two and a half hours from the capital city of San Salvador. It is made up of an urban center of about 12,000 people and is surrounded by 17 cantons, with a combined population of 25,000. It is a largely agricultural community, as it is surrounded by coffee plantations and rural communities of subsistence farmers.



### **Mission Statement:**

Our Sister Parish (OSP) Mission is a nonprofit organization and a faith-based ecumenical effort designed to bring hope and social development to the poor of the town of Berlín, El Salvador, particularly those who live in cantons of Berlín. Our goal is to raise awareness of and embrace solidarity by developing committed relationships within churches in the U.S. and with our brothers and sisters in El Salvador. In the relationships that develop between U.S. churches and the poor of the cantons, faith will grow and the love of God will be profoundly experienced for all involved. The Mission is administered cooperatively by Our Sister Parish Board and the Pastoral Team of Berlín.

### **Mission Partners:**

#### **Pastoral Team (Berlin, El Salvador)**

The Pastoral Team, made up of members of the cantons of Berlín, has served the people of Berlín for more than twenty-five years. They organize and educate community leaders, facilitate project requests, financially manage projects, fulfill basic requests for health, education, food, and clothing that come to them every day, and provide pastoral care to the people of Berlín.

#### **Our Sister Parish Board (Iowa)**

The OSP Board is an ecumenical steering committee of volunteers from partner churches working with the Pastoral Team to facilitate and support the mission. Their responsibilities include educating people in the Des Moines Presbytery and others about the work of the mission. They assist churches that wish to organize delegations, promote mission projects, fundraise, and help the churches of Iowa work together to improve the lives of the people in Berlín. The OSP Board also supports and advises the Mission Co-Worker as he/she works on behalf of the mission.

#### **Presbytery of Des Moines (Iowa)**

Located in the heart of Iowa, the Presbytery of Des Moines consists of fifty-four churches across twenty-five counties of south-central Iowa for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Several of the churches share partnerships with cantons of Berlín, El Salvador.

## **Programs and Accomplishments of the Organization:**

- Churches of the Des Moines Presbytery are invited to partner with cantons in Berlín. Currently, there are eleven official church/canton relationships. Churches and their sister cantons establish covenants with one another. As a part of that, the churches commit to visit their sister canton regularly to know the people, their hopes and needs. From those visits, the church commits to helping the canton achieve the goals defined during the visits of the delegations. Projects thus far have included water, solar, latrines, and construction of community centers and churches.
- Additional churches and communities support various projects in the cantons surrounding Berlín.
- An OSP-sponsored medical delegation visits Berlín each year for the purpose of providing health exams and medicines to the poor.
- Don Justo Coffee with Dignity is an economic development project of the organization.
- Education support includes scholarships for students who want to continue on to high school and, in a limited number of cases, to higher education. Support has also included the purchase of student uniforms and infrastructure projects for marginalized schools. Many delegations bring school supplies when they visit.
- A limited number of cantons receive help with the purchase of fertilizer at crop planting time each year. Additional communities are supported with the coffee sale proceeds.

## **Background Information about the Mission:**

Our Sister Parish Mission officially began in 2001 in the Pastoral House of Berlín. Before that time, six Salvadorans worked informally out of the local parish church in social mission, but the resources were limited. The current six members, who are now known now as the Pastoral Team, possess organizational skills from their experience. They are gifted with a theology that embraces liberation for the poor that was formed by living through a 12-year-long civil war from 1980 to 1992. They believe in mission to the masses not to individual needs (though naturally many individual needs are met in the giving of food, clothing, and medicines out of the Pastoral House). Their commitment to provide social support is impressive. Some do this work without being provided a salary, even though they work nearly full-time in the effort. Others might receive a small monthly stipend if sufficient money is available. One person is regularly paid a small monthly salary. Two members of the Pastoral Team are trained Delegates of the Word, and one is a Catechist.

Likewise, the OSP Board brings gifts to the table. Members of that group coordinate the Mission on the U.S. end, and most have visited the cantons of Berlín. Most belong to a church that has a sister canton or in some other way relates to the poor of El Salvador. They know and understand the justice needs of the people and live a faith that promotes projects supported by the church.

## **Key Theological Issues Reflected in the Ministry:**

Our mission is reflected in the words of the Old Testament prophet Micah (6:8), “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” And in the words of Jesus from Matthew 25:40, “Truly I tell you, as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” The work of the Mission seeks justice in the form of a livelihood for the poor of Berlín. Food for the table, clean water, education, safe homes, medical care and jobs are among the justice issues that are defined by the Pastoral Team. Having lived through a civil war, the Team and those who work with the Team understand the fears and needs created by violence. Thus, non-violence is touted, a reflection of the kindness urged by the prophet Micah. Jesus, in identifying with the poor and oppressed, invites us into this same solidarity. And for all involved, it is a walk with God...always humble in perception and nature.

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

### **Major Responsibilities:**

- Meet with the Pastoral Team regularly to build consensus in program and project areas. All work is accomplished in conjunction with the Pastoral Team.
- Provide schedules and budgets for visiting delegations. Ensure all resources are secured, including transportation, food, housing, and translation. Meet the delegations at the airport and stay with them through the entire time of their visit.
- Provide communication (including translation of documents and letters) between the Pastoral Team, the Our Sister Parish board, and sister churches that have working relationships with cantons.
- Develop a working knowledge of sites and organizations that will assist delegations to understand the social, political and religious dimensions of El Salvador. It is also important for delegations to understand the history of violence suffered by the people of this land, and the continued violence that is exhibited from the deep roots of repression and injustice experienced by the poor of El Salvador.
- Return to Iowa, at least twice a year, to report to the OSP Board and meet with partner congregations for updates, education, and possible fundraising.

### **Characteristics and Qualifications:**

- Faith-based, compassionate, able to live in and understand the Salvadoran culture
- Displays a non-judgmental, cool-headed, and balanced demeanor
- Proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish

- Skill in working as a collaborative team member
- Capacity to drive a car/pickup, including a manual transmission
- Ability to use a computer and keep accurate files and records
- Able to walk long distances
- In good health and able to perform physical duties
- The desire to love the poor of El Salvador
- Capacity to communicate to masses as well as to individuals

## **REFERENCES**

OSP Board Members you can contact for further information about the job.

Steve Gude

Mission Co-Worker Search Committee and OSP Board Member

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Kathy Bassett

Former Mission Co-Worker, Current Interim Communication Liaison, and OSP Board Member

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Don Justo Coffee Coordinator and OSP Board Member

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**Contextual Readings for Further Background Information about the History and Theology of the Mission:**

- “The White Savior Industrial Complex,” Teju Cole. *The Atlantic*, March 21st, 2012.
- *Liberation Theology for Armchair Theologians*, Miguel de la Torre
- *The Violence of Love*, Oscar A. Romero
- “From Madness to Hope” – Commission on the Truth for El Salvador (Official UN Report)
- “Unfinished Houses,” John J. McLaughlin. *America Magazine*, July 21-28th, 2014.
- “Subsidiarity, A Papal Explainer,” Nathan Schneider. *America Magazine*, September 24th, 2015
- “Stop Trying to Save the World – Big Ideas Are Destroying International Development” Michael Hobbes. *The New Republic*, December 2nd, 2014
- “The Truth of El Mozote,” Mark Danner. *The New Yorker* , December 6th, 1993
- “The Iconography of Sorrow: How Easter Transforms Our Response to Suffering,” Luke Bretherton. *ABC Religion and Ethics*, March 31st, 2015
- “Why Partnership Isn’t Enough,” Alexandra Tranvik. *Sojourners* , August 18th, 2016