

MISSION MOMENT

Love is Holding Hands & Singing

Many of us have gone weeks, months, or even more than a year, without seeing our beloveds during the pandemic. Meanwhile, family separation has been an even harder and longer reality for many immigrants.

From March 21, 2020 through November 8, 2021 – 597 days – the U.S. land borders with Mexico and Canada were closed to non-citizens for non-essential travel. This pandemic policy meant that loved ones on either side of the border were physically unable to travel to one another by car.

In other parts of the world, visa processing slowed to a trickle, or complete halt, for most U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. Entry to the U.S. remained closed to most.

In June 2021, many of us were celebrating the rise of vaccination rates, the decrease of Covid-19 cases, and the thought that life was returning to “normal,” or at least some version of it. However, many families were still unable to travel or see one another.

Alejandra Rosas, the wife of Rev. Pedro Ramos of Comunidad Limen Christian Church in Tucson, Arizona, was in exactly this situation. Living near the Arizona border, Alejandra’s mother and aunt have border crossing cards that allowed them to enter for short visits; however, they too were unable to travel to the U.S. during the pandemic. They were the only two still residing in Mexico. Their ten siblings and their 87 year old mother had become U.S. citizens and reside in the U.S.

When the matriarch of this family went into Hospice care, all became worried. When the doctor said she had weeks left to live, they became hopeless because the border was closed. When the doctor said she had only days left, they were ready to go to the border and beg for entry to be at their mother’s bedside.

Without knowing that the call would lead to a solution, Alejandra reached out to Disciples

Immigration Legal Counsel. As the immigration attorney who assists Disciples pastors and their families, Natalie Teague strategized for a solution. Within days, she had worked with the family to compile an emergency humanitarian petition for one entry for Alejandra’s mother and aunt. “I honestly did not think it would work, but we had to try,” she said.

Within days, Customs and Border Patrol responded asking for the proposed date and time. Two days later, Alejandra went to the border and picked up her mother and aunt. It was the first time that they had seen one another in person in well over a year. The joy of this reunion is palpable from the photo they sent after crossing together.

Five days later, their mother died. However, in the last days, all 12 siblings were able to surround their mother’s bedside. All she wanted was to hear her children sing to her one last time. Her final wishes were granted. This is how love remains, responds, and brings families home!

On behalf of this family and Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel, thank you for your support of Week of Compassion, which makes this life changing work possible.

