



Spring 2025

+Bishop Medardo E. Gomez **Soto+** **1945-2025**



Lutherans in El Salvador are mourning the loss of their Bishop Emeritus Medardo E. Gómez Soto, who was renowned throughout Latin America and beyond as a powerful advocate for peace and human rights.

"Bishop Medardo Gómez was an outstanding leader in his church, in Central America and in the wider Lutheran and ecumenical communion," said Rev. Sonia Skupch, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Regional Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean. "He was a wise man, faithful to the Gospel, with a clear commitment to justice and peace, and a man who was not afraid to speak of mercy and peace in very turbulent times."

Bishop Gómez died on 27 March at the age of 79 following a long illness.

Travelers to El Salvador with Seeds of Hope and Habitat for Humanity met with Bishop Gomez as part of their itineraries. He always had a word of appreciation and encouragement to share with us.



A tribute to Bishop Gomez from our friend, Pastor Christian Chavarria, originally posted on Facebook:

"Today the heart is heavy, today the soul aches, but rest in the promises of our Lord Jesus.

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to know this great man, for all the moments we shared, for all the dreams I dreamed. I will miss my beloved Bishop immensely. Thanks to him, I am who I am today. He taught

me to love God above all else in life; he taught me humility not with words but with his example; he taught me not only to love communities but to be part of them. He taught me to dream and to achieve my dreams with God's help. He taught me gratitude. "When you are grateful, God always blesses you," he told me.

He gave me confidence in life, telling me, "You are a beloved child of God." He celebrated each of my successes and congratulated me, saying, "You will go far, don't stray from God."

Every time I went on a trip, I would ask for his blessing, and he would always say: May everything go well for you, old man, God be with you. And when I returned, the first call was to the Bishop: Hello, Bishop, I'm back. And he would reply: Good, old man, how good to have you here, welcome.

So many things learned, so many memories that life will not be long enough to thank you for..."
Farewell, dear Bishop Medardo Gomez."

Pastor Christian Chavarria

The Rev. Guadalupe
Cortez de Huevo

Elected Bishop



The Seeds of Hope Team is pleased to welcome Obispa Cortez de Huezo and looks forward to working with her. She was installed as Bishop on January 12 of this year – the first female bishop of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church (ILS). She will serve a four-year term. The Rev. Cortez de Huezo previously worked in social services, as an evangelical catechist, pastor, and diaconal pastoral coordinator in the ILS. The SOH delegation of July 2024 had the opportunity to meet and visit with her as she led the group on a trek to an organic coffee growing area.

Board of Directors Elected



At the same time that the election of the new bishop was taking place, the Lutheran Church in El Salvador chose new leaders for its Junta Directiva (Board of Directors). Many of these individuals have ties to the Seeds of Hope Program.

Pictured above, from left to right:

Pastor Concepción “Conchi” Marina Angel, Health Program Coordinator and pastor of 4 churches.

Adriana Alvarado, recently elected as Coordinator of Youth Pastoral Direction. (She is sponsored by Diane Fillips of Family of Christ and gave the address for the celebratory Encuentro gathering at the congregations of Pastors Matias and Martina in July 2024.)

Pastor Rafael Menjivar Saavedra, Coordinator of Communication and pastor of 2 churches.

Pastor Christian Chavarría, Coordinator of the Sister Church Program, reserve pastor at Resurrección, and pastor of an additional congregation. (Christian most recently visited Minnesota in October 2023, speaking at Family of Christ and Trinity Lutheran, where his artwork is displayed. He has been a long-time friend and advocate for the SOH Program.)

Pastor Cruz Antonio Calles, Coordinator of Migrant Pastoral Care and pastor of one church and a mission congregation.

Pastor Ivonn Jiménez, member of the Migrant Pastoral Care team and an additional congregation. (She greeted the SOH Delegation 2024 at the airport.)

La Reverenda Obispa Guadalupe Cortez de Huezo, is now the President and newly elected Bishop of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church.

Pastor Arisbe Gomez is the daughter of the late Bishop Medardo Gómez and the late Rev. Abelina Centeno de Gómez. She is now the Vice-Presidenta of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church.

The next Seeds of Hope Accompaniment Trip to El Salvador is scheduled for July 2026! Is this life-changing, faith-strengthening experience in your future?!?



Letters from our sponsored students:



I'm Gerson, and in this short letter, I'll try to summarize and describe what the scholarship program has meant to my life over the years and the achievements I've made because of it.

I've been a person with many goals and objectives, which I wish to continue achieving step by step. In 2015, I began my studies for a specialty in accounting, which I had a three-year period to complete (in secondary school). Since 2016, my dear friend and wonderful Seeds of Hope sponsor, Bev, who I deeply appreciate and whose footprint will always be on my life, helped me finance my studies. At the time, it was one of my goals. In 2017, thanks to God and my sponsor's help, I achieved that goal with very good grades and a lot of new knowledge that serves me well to this day.

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Hello! My name is Wendy Crespin, and I want to tell you how my life has changed thanks to the Semillas de Esperanza program and Emmaus Church.

I've had the opportunity to participate in the program since I was little... I remember being around 8 years old when I first received financial aid for my studies, and it's inexplicable how excited I felt knowing there were people who trusted and believed in my education thus I remember with much love and affection my first sponsors: Mark and Jane.

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Hello, it is a pleasure to greet you and I hope that, by the Grace of God, all of you are well.

I would like to tell you that last December, I finished my studies at the Open Modular University with a license in English. At this moment, I am waiting for my graduation which will be May 21, 2025.

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**Thank you for your continued support of this
amazing ministry!**

Your Seeds of Hope Team: Keri Buisman, Gary Dosdall, Pastor Josh Nelson, Pastor Kristie Hennig (retired) (Our Saviour's Lutheran Church/Minneapolis), Sue Provo, Patti Rude, Jenny Florio, and Jill Cornell (Trinity Lutheran Church/Long Lake)

[CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about Seeds of Hope and Student Sponsorship

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