

VIOLA TO PANAMA

March - April 2023 Prayer Letter

Greetings to all in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

♦ March

During the month of March, we spent our time packing and preparing for our move to Panama. We also sent in the necessary paperwork to start Maria's US Citizenship process. At the current moment it is estimated that Maria's naturalization for the US will take nine months. For Panama, we are going to be applying for the Panama Missionary Visa (PMV) which will grant us a two-year conditional residency and can take anywhere from six months to one year to be approved. However, we are still waiting to receive all the paperwork needed from the US government before we can officially apply for the PMV. Also during March, we were invited back to be with two churches in Alabama and one church in Ohio.

♦ April

WE HAVE LANDED IN PANAMA! We arrived in Panama on April 7th and hit the ground running. We were able to pick up our truck from Stan and Jackie and immediately started unpacking and organizing the house. However, after only being in Panama for one day, Maria received the bad news that her grandfather (father's side), who was a strong Catholic, had died. Maria ended up having to go to Costa Rica for a about a week for the funeral. Please be in prayer for Maria and her family in this time, for not only did her grandfather pass away, but they also received the unfortunate news that her other grandfather has developed intestinal cancer and that he only has a few months left. He is currently in the hospital.

A few days after our arrival in Panama, we were able to welcome and host the missions team that came down from our home church. We were able to have an event for the teenagers (we had about 35 teens show up), where the team was able to perform gospel skits and organize games for the teens, and the teenagers got to hear a clear gospel message. We were also able to do home visits and take food to three of the church families and sandwiches to the children of two different farm living quarters for indigenous workers. The teenagers of the missions team got to see how so many indigenous Panamanians live. In their own words, "I came to realize just how spoiled we are in America." They also helped in painting the majority of the church's perimeter wall.

My language studies are progressing well. After two and a half months I am now able to speak in some very basic present tense. While far from fluent, it has allowed me to connect on a basic level with the people in the church and allowed me to get by in a handful of stores as well. Please pray that I will be able to pick up the language quickly and correctly. Nothing is more important in learning a language than learning it in the correct way. After talking with Stan and Jackie, we have decided that Maria and I will primarily be helping in leading the youth of the church. While I am far from being able to teach in Spanish fluently, Maria will be diving in headlong with leading and teaching the teenage girls. Please pray as we begin our work, with not only all the church but specifically with the youth of the church and of the area.

♦ Church Update

The Panama inspectors and officials are still unfortunately dragging their feet in granting the church its occupancy permit. We are still waiting to find out when the next inspection will be.



With blessings,
Zach & Maria Viola
Missionaries to Panama



Prayer Requests

1. Pray for the lost souls of Panama and the church plant in Boquete.
2. Pray that Maria's citizenship process for the USA will go smoothly with no issues.
3. Pray for the Panama Missionary Visa process, that there will be no problems and that we will receive the visa and our conditional residency quickly.
4. Pray that the inspector will pass the church building and will grant the occupancy permit.



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