Recently, Cadance Tyler visited El Salvador as part of her studies at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. She has written a series of blog posts, including the story below, on the BGAV Blog. Visit BGAV.org/blog to read more.

As soon as we stepped off the plane in El Salvador, we were treated with genuine hospitality from our gracious hosts. Wherever we went we received hugs, smiles, and plates of food. Our first host, Comunidad Cristiana Bautista, offered their homes for us to stay in each night.

They were inquisitive about church in Virginia, and they were eager to answer our questions about where God is moving in their community and country. They fed us more than was humanly possible to eat, but we did not just walk away with full bellies. Our hearts were full of love and friendship.

Our second hosts in the city of San Salvador have a nonprofit, Mision Vida y Paz, and work in schools with volunteers to teach values and empower the students to transform their community. Their passion for partnering with churches and community organizations to create change and to share God’s love through action is contagious.

They took time each day to travel with us to meet with members of the Lutheran church and the government to get a better grasp on the issue of migration and the church’s response. They ate with us, shared their own stories, and took an interest in our own journeys. They could have made a list of places to go and sent us on our way, but they sacrificed their work week and time with family to make sure we felt welcome.

Each hug, question, and cup of coffee while in El Salvador reminded me of the church in Acts. We read in Acts 2:45-47 that
generosity, fellowship, and joy were an important marker of what it meant to BE the church. They made sure that people's physical and spiritual needs were being met.

My time in El Salvador reminded me of the importance of hospitality. Our churches should be places of generosity, fellowship, and joy! Not only should we act that way toward those within our faith community, but we should also make sure that our hospitality is reaching those who visit and those who may never step inside of our church walls.

Hospitality knows no borders or differences in language. As followers of Jesus, we have a hope and love that's worth sharing! Are you generous and loving with your neighbors? Do you open up your home or table with others? Are you a church member who welcomes visitors with open arms? If not, what is it that you can do to ensure that your church is bursting with generosity, fellowship, and joy?

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