The Gifts of Sharing Ideas

I awaited the arrival of the group with excitement - it seemed a little like the anticipation of gifts at Christmas time! I always enjoy accompanying the groups that come to visit the Salvadoran Lutheran Church. When a group comes, there are many gifts, like the friendships that grow into hermandad, a Spanish word that means "partnership", but that doesn't catch the whole sense. Think of partnership, brotherhood, and sisterhood all mixed up in the same pupusa, a traditional Salvadoran food. In the same way that the pupusa contains beans, cheese, and ground pork all mashed together into a corn tortilla, hermandad contains different cultures, lifestyles, languages, and backgrounds all mashed together in a common faith and hope.

A few weeks ago I was awaiting the arrival of some of the friends I had made in the Iglesia Misión Cristiana of Nicaragua. They were coming to meet with church leaders involved in similar mission projects. In both countries, as economic struggles rise, access to basic needs becomes more and more difficult, and the ability for families to provide their own food becomes more and more necessary. Churches in both countries have programs which aim to feed families in several communities by helping them grow their own food. The more each group shared with the other, the greater their excitement grew, and the more they helped solve their own challenges. At the end of the visit both groups had learned so much from each other. They committed to getting together again next year to advance and deepen their work, and hermandad.

We pray that hermandad grows in our congregations as well as the inspiration of sharing in God's love.

Nicholas Green serves in El Salvador as a long-term volunteer with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of El Salvador. He supports National Youth, with the Family and Gender Program of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of El Salvador, and also assists the Communications Program.