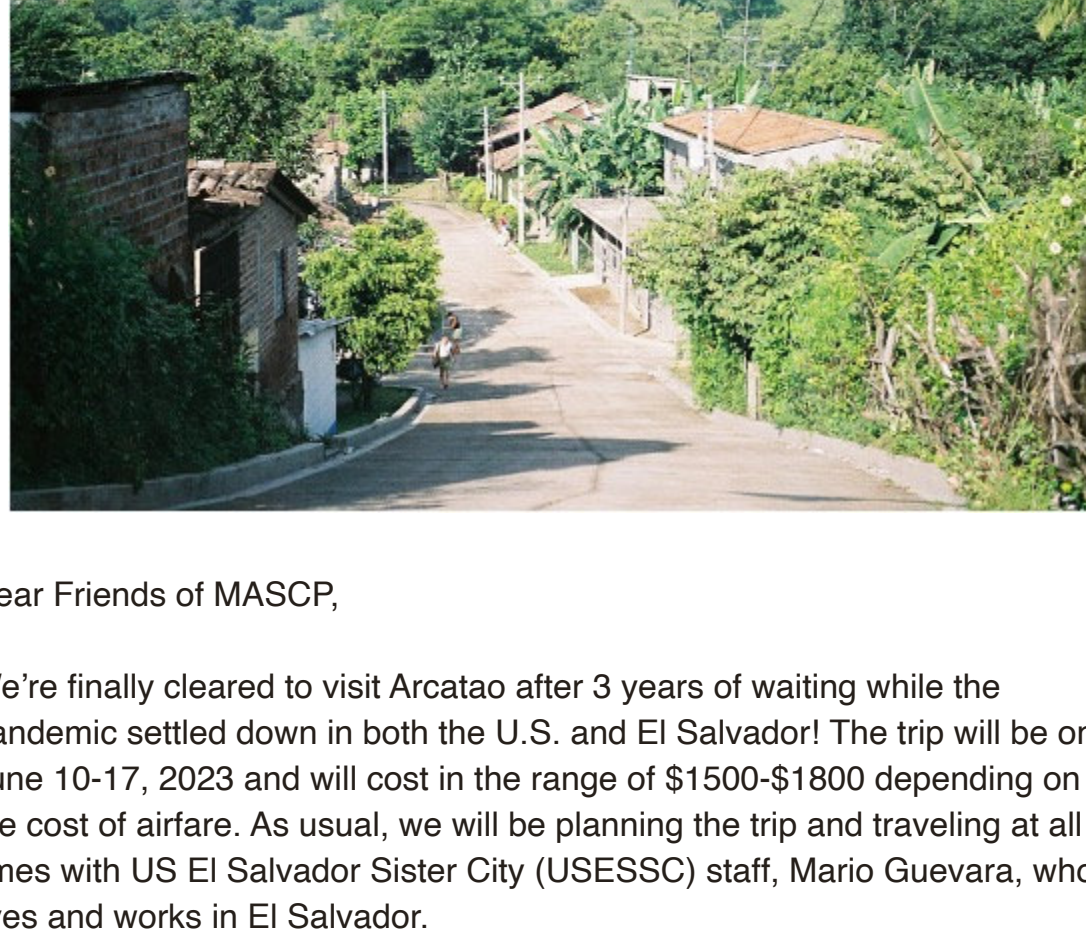


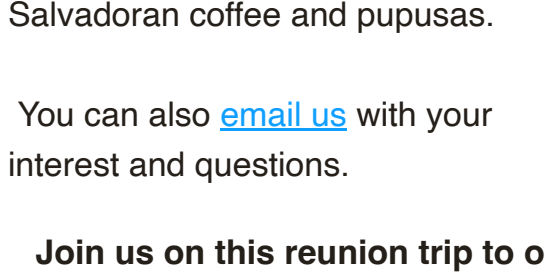
Join MASCP's Reunion Trip to Arcatao



Dear Friends of MASCP,

We're finally cleared to visit Arcatao after 3 years of waiting while the pandemic settled down in both the U.S. and El Salvador! The trip will be on June 10-17, 2023 and will cost in the range of \$1500-\$1800 depending on the cost of airfare. As usual, we will be planning the trip and traveling at all times with US El Salvador Sister City (USESSC) staff, Mario Guevara, who lives and works in El Salvador.

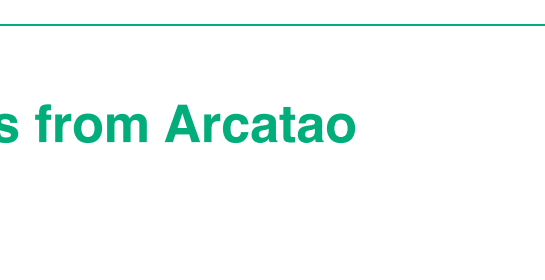
Among many other activities, we'll visit Saint Romero's apartment and the chapel where he was assassinated in San Salvador. We'll be staying in homes in Arcatao and learning about everyday life in this small mountain town. We plan to visit schools and speak with students in their English classes. We're planning programming to air on the local community radio stations and will be sharing a day at the beach with some folks from Arcatao —many of whom have never been to the ocean. You'll learn about the political and social situation in El Salvador and about the people-to-people accompaniment that guides MASCP and USESSC.



Join us for a trip that will bring new awareness, new understanding, lasting friendship and much fun!

For more information: Join us at Finca Cafe, 2500 Rimrock Rd on March 11 from 10 AM-12 PM.

We'll be going through an informational packet about the trip, discussing next meetings, answering any questions you may have and enjoying authentic Salvadoran coffee and pupusas.

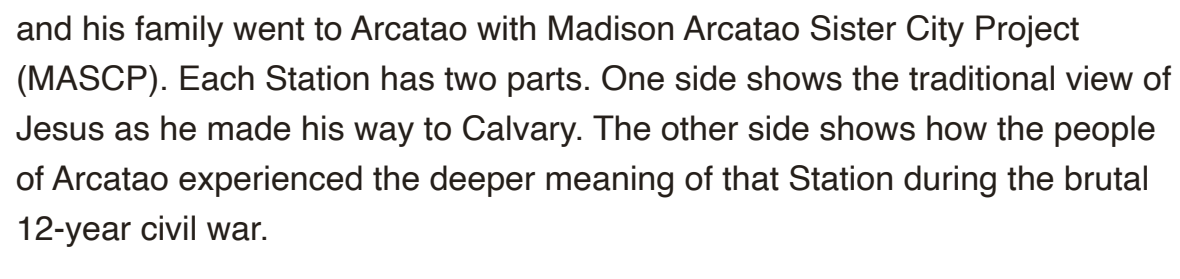


You can also [email us](#) with your interest and questions.

Join us on this reunion trip to our beautiful sister city in El Salvador!

The Stations of the Cross from Arcatao displayed in Madison

Photographs of the unique Stations of the Cross/Viacrucis that are painted on the walls of the church in Arcatao will be exhibited at Bethel Lutheran Church during Lent this year. We hope you will take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to see and ponder this amazing collection.



The Viacrucis painted along the walls of the Catholic church in Arcatao

Roland Torres, a local photographer, took photos of the 14 Stations when he and his family went to Arcatao with Madison Arcatao Sister City Project (MASCP). Each Station has two parts. One side shows the traditional view of Jesus as he made his way to Calvary. The other side shows how the people of Arcatao experienced the deeper meaning of that Station during the brutal 12-year civil war.

Bethel Lutheran Church is hosting the exhibit in the "Gallery Hallway to Good Shepherd Chapel" which is right across from the Bethel Lutheran sanctuary.



Where: Bethel Lutheran Church, 312 Wisconsin Ave, 1st floor "Gallery Hallway"
When: March 1-April 30
Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM, Wednesday 8:30 AM - 7:00 PM, Saturday 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM, Sunday 7:00 AM - 1:00 PM.

For other times available call Bethel Reception 608-257-3577

Opening reception: March 5th, 10:30-12 Noon. All are welcome!

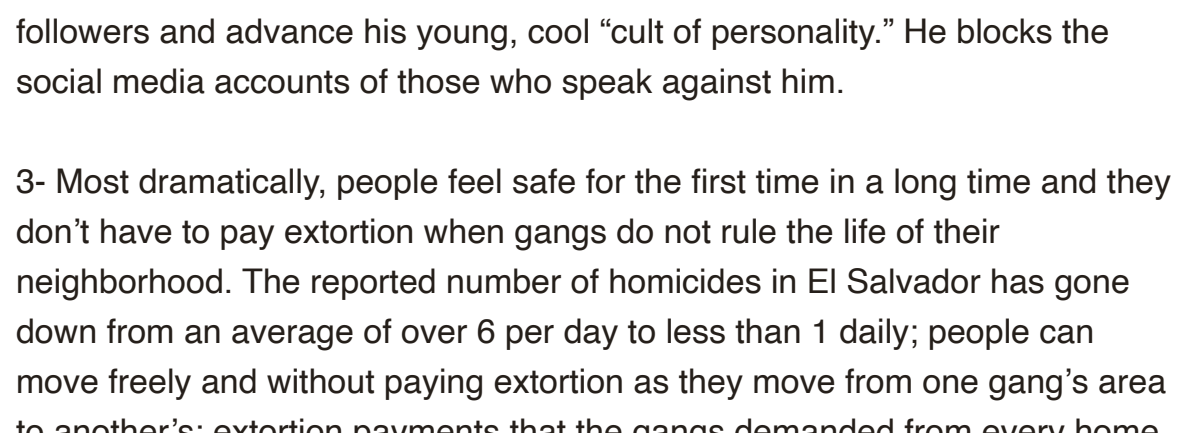
Meet and Greet MASCP: April 16, 10:30-11:30 AM, Good Shepherd Chapel

Why is Nayib Bukele, El Salvador's authoritarian leader, so popular?

By all accounts, Bukele's popularity rating stands at around 85% of the population. This despite extending the "State of Exception" 11 times which allows the government to keep people in prison indefinitely without charge and curtails certain Constitutional rights including the right to assemble, the right to legal counsel, and the right to family visits in detention sites. The military and police have made 65,000 arrests—2% of the Salvadoran population is in prison.

Groups of 300-500 people go before a judge for their initial appearance in court. Some are members of violent gangs and many others are innocent of any criminal activity. They were arrested off the streets or during raids in their homes because they have tattoos or possibly know someone in a gang or were accused with an anonymous tip or to simply meet a police [arrest quota](#). Most of these raids and arrests are happening in poor neighborhoods where gangs tend to thrive.

Bukele has forcibly removed opponents from office including Supreme Court judges; he mocks and silences the press; his foray into cryptocurrency has lost half of its initial value; he is running for a second consecutive term despite this being prohibited by the Constitution; his human rights abuses and attacks on democratic institutions have been documented by Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International, the Human Rights Foundation (HRF), Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) among many others.



The new "Terrorism Confinement Center" in Tecoluca, El Salvador. Handout via Reuters

So why is he so popular in El Salvador?

1- Bukele has broken the hold of the two major parties in Salvadoran politics —FMLN and ARENA. Most Salvadorans are disgusted with the criminality and the lack of change from either major party and find a home in Bukele's "Nuevas Ideas" party.

2- Bukele uses social media very effectively to communicate with his followers and advance his young, cool "cult of personality." He blocks the social media accounts of those who speak against him.

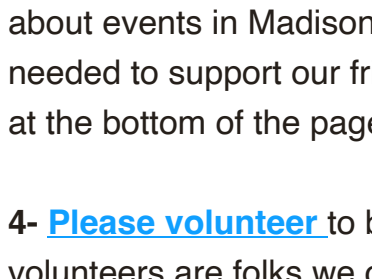
3- Most dramatically, people feel safe for the first time in a long time and they don't have to pay extortion when gangs do not rule the life of their neighborhood. The reported number of homicides in El Salvador has gone down from an average of over 6 per day to less than 1 daily; people can move freely and without paying extortion as they move from one gang's area to another's; extortion payments that the gangs demanded from every home and business in their territory have ended.

After the trauma of the ever-present memories of the 12-year civil war and now decades of escalating gang violence, people feel safer and like they can breathe. This feeling of safety is important and real. It also comes at a huge price for many and [especially for those who are already poor and marginalized](#).

We learned of a horrific example of these random arrests two days ago when the police staged nighttime house-to-house raids in Arcatao, where there is no gang activity. They arbitrarily arrested a young man, with no evidence to support their charge that he had ties to gangs. His family is distraught and has no recourse because of the ongoing "State of Exception".

The U.S. is not innocent in the situation El Salvador is facing. MASCP acknowledges and condemns the actions by the US government that preceded what is happening today: The multi-billion U.S. support for the Salvadoran government during the civil war, 1980-1992, that forced people to flee—many to the US; the racism, poverty, hopelessness, and status-less experience of Central American youth in the barrios of Los Angeles which birthed the gangs known today as MS13 and La 18; the deportation—starting with Bill Clinton's 1994 anti-crime bill-- of tens of thousands of MS 13 and La 18 gang members to El Salvador when that country was not properly forewarned nor able to deal with that amount of criminal influx. The gangs have grown in number and power since then.

MASCP needs your help!



We are an enthusiastic group of 7 volunteers who keep MASCP alive. We welcome and need all the help we can get!

Here's how you can get involved and help MASCP thrive for another 37 years:

1- [Please donate](#) whatever you can. We are unlike other sister cities in that we send \$7,600 to El Salvador every year. You can donate and see the variety of projects that the money supports on our website. The more donations we receive, the less fundraising we have to do.

2- [Please like and SHARE](#) our Facebook page. We have a fabulous longtime volunteer for MASCP, Marilee Sushoreba, who adds events, photos, and news to the MASCP Facebook page on a regular basis. When you share with your friends, more people learn about El Salvador, MASCP, and local international events which help fulfill an important part of MASCP's mission.

3- [Sign up](#) to receive our monthly online newsletter. Not only will you learn about events in Madison and news from Arcatao but also about actions needed to support our friends in El Salvador. You can sign up on our website at the bottom of the page.

4- [Please volunteer](#) to be in what we call the "second circle." These volunteers are folks we can call on occasionally to translate, to help at fairs where we sell embroidery from Arcatao, for fundraising events, setting up exhibits, tabling with us at the Farmer's Market, picking up things, hauling, providing snacks, etc. [Email us](#) to volunteer to join our "second circle."

Actually, we need volunteers NOW to bring cookies to the opening of the Stations of the Cross at Bethel Lutheran Church on March 5th, at 10:30 AM and the closing on April 16th at 10:30. Anyone? [Email us](#).

5- [Help with the Embroidery Project](#). We order about \$2,500 worth of embroidery yearly and sell the beautiful pieces at Madison fairs. You can help us make cards, price items, decide on new products, make display decisions, and decide what to order from the embroidery coop in Arcatao. If you're interested in handwork, this working group is for you! [Email us](#).

6- [Join a trip to Arcatao](#). We're sponsoring one June 10-17, 2023. It's an amazing way to connect with folks in Arcatao and become part of the long relationship between Madison and Arcatao. [Email us](#) if you're interested.

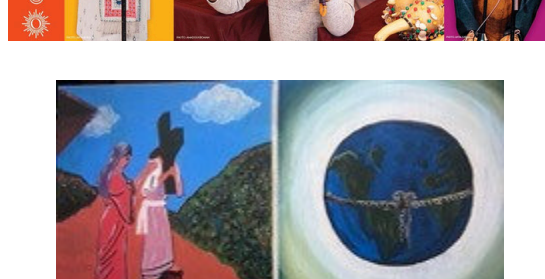
Many thanks for any and all your help!!!!

Save the Date!



Latino Fair

March 3, 5:30 PM-7:30 PM
Overture Center Promenade Room



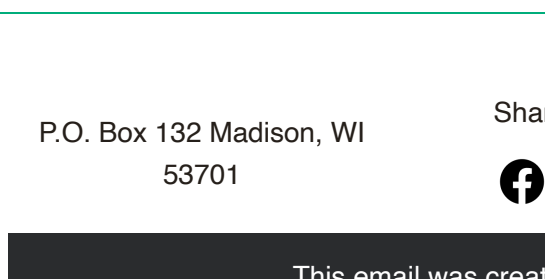
Explore the Legacy of Monseñor Oscar Romero

March 4 10 AM CST on Zoom with USESSC [registration required](#)



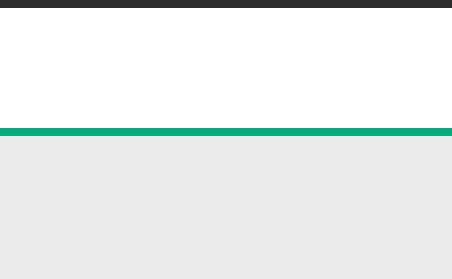
Opening of Stations of the Cross exhibit with photographer, Roland Torres

March 5, 10:30 AM-12 noon, "Hallway gallery" Bethel Lutheran Church



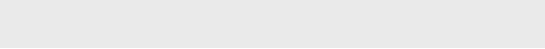
Madison's Annual International Festival

April 1 & 2 10 AM-5 PM, Overture Center for the Arts. MASCP will be there with other Madison Sister Cities on April 1.



Celebration of Stations of the Cross exhibit

Meet and Greet MASCP
April 16, 10:30-11:30 AM, Good Shepherd Chapel, Bethel Lutheran Church

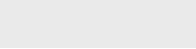


MASCP sponsored trip to Arcatao, El Salvador

June 10-17, San Salvador and Arcatao

P.O. Box 132 Madison, WI 53701

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www.mascp.org

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