

## Dear God by Marta Castillo



The article appeared on the Mosaic Conference website and is reprinted here by permission.

Dear God,

It's me, Marta.

I am still glowing inside from my visit to Garden Chapel yesterday. The two-hour drive on a Sunday morning was long enough to quiet my mind and open space for your presence, your peace, and your Spirit to settle in and take hold.

Upon arriving I found the two pastors, Tim and Hector, already hard at work, setting up systems for two services, one in English and one in Spanish (or Spanglish), in-person and on Zoom, one upstairs and one downstairs in their newly renovated building, divinely provided through a community ministry connection. These pastors have full-time time jobs and a deep passion for Christ, ministry, the Word of God, and their diverse community. Oh, the stories they tell, Lord, of how You are working and moving.

After the service, one of the sisters invited me and the two pastor's wives for a coffee at a local Colombian bakery. What a wonderful gift to sit and fellowship with my sisters, covering topics from the Conference to our ministry work and our families. I am still glowing, Lord, from spending time with You and Your people.

But it's not just at Garden Chapel but at Spring Mount, Plains, Nations Worship Center, Peña de Horeb, Mennonite Bible Fellowship, Circle of Hope, Evangelica Menonita de Oracion y Adoracion, and all the other churches I am invited to visit.

"For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all" (Ephesians 4:4-6, *NLT*).

Thank You, Lord.

Love, Marta

Dear Mosaic Conference,

It's me, Marta.

During the Pathways Forward focus groups, I heard a phrase multiple times: "I love the diversity of Mosaic *but*..." The "*BUT*" threw me off. "But" is used to introduce a phrase contrasting what has already been mentioned. It invalidates everything said before. It does not allow for both things to exist at the same time.

If we use the word "AND," we can make both statements true: "I love the diversity of Mosaic *AND*..."

We need the *AND* to answer in unity. We need the *AND* for our commitment "to making our churches places of radical hospitality, inviting and engaging all people regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, lifestyle, or socioeconomic status. God desires to bring transformation to all people; therefore, we will welcome all people and call all people to repentance and holy living" (*Grace*

*and Truth*, Church Together Statement).

We need the *AND* to "be intentional about identifying those on the margins of our churches and society and provide resources for the work of mutual transformation according to the good news of Jesus Christ" (*Going to the Margins*, Church Together Statement).

The diverse congregations of Mosaic Conference already minister in the margins. There are no *BUTS* about it. Let us be attentive to sticking points and replace them with, "We love the diversity of the body of Christ in Mosaic, *AND* we will worship the Lord and serve the Lord in unity."

"True worship of God transcends time, culture, language, and nation," says Nelson Kraybill in his book, *Apocalypse and Allegiance*. Kraybill says that when we worship God, we join a vast multitude of saints from all peoples and all eras of history. When we "see ourselves as part of this multitude, it makes us less likely to idolize our countries. We are less likely to let issues and perspectives of our own generation eclipse the shared wisdom of saints through the ages."

Love, Marta



Marta Castillo is Associate Executive Minister for the Mosaic Conference. She resides in Norristown, PA, with her husband, Julio. They have three sons, Christian, Andres and Daniel and one granddaughter, Isabel.

## Directory Update Time

With the current year winding down and a new one on the horizon, it's time for the annual review of all information for the upcoming 2024 edition of the Church Directory. Please take a few minutes to look at your information as it is listed in the current 2023 directory. In addition, be sure to review anniversary and birthdate information in the back to make sure that it is correct. If any changes need to be made, please call or email the office at [info@justswamp.com](mailto:info@justswamp.com) with any

additions and/or changes.

Later this month, your Church Secretary will begin the final "in-person process" by placing a table in the foyer by the sanctuary. Three-ring binders will be placed on it containing pages with the most recent information that has been provided to the office for your final verification. It is hoped to complete this process by mid-December so a new directory can be printed and placed in church mailboxes sometime in early January.



## A few notes...

### A reminder from the Trustees...

Please remember to turn off all lights and close the doors between the office area and the Fellowship Hall before leaving the building when you are using it for activities during the week. This will help keep our cooling, heating and electricity costs as low as possible.

### Worship service recordings...

Sermons are posted on our website each week, but if you would like an audio CD, please let the audio/visual persons in the sound booth know either before or immediately after the service so they can prepare a CD for you to take home. If you would like to view or listen to the whole service, you can go to

the Live Stream on our YouTube channel any time after the service.

### Updating Directory Info....

Are you moving? Getting a new phone number or e-mail address? Be sure to let your church secretary know so that we can update your information for future editions of the Church Directory and place an update in the Sunday Bulletin.

### Prayer & Praise...

As you pray for the requests listed in the bulletin or from the One-Call system, please ask God to show you how you can respond to these needs.

## Christmas Events

Here is a current listing of 2023 Christmas Season Events that have been planned. Look for additional information in an upcoming insert and in the weekly bulletin as events draw closer.

Wednesday, November 22  
Thanksgiving Eve Service 7:00 pm

Wednesday, November 29  
Youth Group 6:30 pm

Saturday, December 2  
Children's Christmas Program  
Practice 9:30 am  
Ladies' Tea 12:00 pm

Sunday, December 3  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Men's Lunch 11:45 am

Wednesday, December 6  
Fellowship Meal 6:00 pm  
Clubs & Youth Group 6:30 pm

Thursday, December 7  
Member Meeting 7:00 pm

Saturday, December 9  
Children's Christmas Program  
Practice 9:30 am

Sunday, December 10  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Children's Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 13  
Youth Group 6:30 pm

Sunday, December 17  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Wednesday, December 20  
Fellowship Meal 6:00 pm  
Christmas Caroling 6:30 pm

Sunday, December 24  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm

Wednesday, December 27  
Youth Christmas Party 6:30 pm