



Cheryl VanZandbergen <cheryl@cityviewcc.net>

Shank Update - February and March 2026

1 message

Mike & Marina Shank <mike.shank.southamericamission.org@send.mailerlite.eu>

Thu, Apr 23, 2026 at 11:58 AM

Reply-To: Mike & Marina Shank <mike.shank@southamericamission.org>

To: "cheryl@cityviewcc.net" <cheryl@cityviewcc.net>

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"Matthias is finally here!"





February-March 2026

We are praising God and giving Him thanks for his gift! Matthias Victor Shank was born on March 28th at 3:33pm and weighed 7lbs, 15 oz. "Matthias" means "gift of God," and our prayer is that he would know the gift of God, saving faith in Jesus Christ, and that the Lord would use his life to be a gift and blessing to others! Thankfully, Matthias and Marina are recovering well after the natural birth in the same small hospital where Marilyn was born here in Bolivia.

In the days leading up to Matthias' birth and following, we have been struggling with lots of health challenges - dengue, bacterial infections, chikungunya, ear issues, etc. But we praise God that provided a window for Marina to get some rest leading up to the birth and in her recovery!

Thankfully, our ministry initiatives do not depend fully on us, so while we have been a bit less active in terms of ministry in these days of sickness, birth, and adjusting to having 3 kids while homeschooling, the Lord continues to be at work in the church and in other different ministry initiatives.

While Marina is taking a step back from teaching English with Fundación Amparo, she was able to have a last ice cream social event,

and we continue to connect with the girls through our church, and their birthday parties - where some of them are opening up to have very deep conversations and asking important questions about life and the Bible!

Although less people came than had been planned, Mike was able to preach and spend time with the FRALIC Juvenil (Fraternity of Indigenous Christian Leaders) Youth retreat, challenging them to unity with Christ, unity with one another, and unity in mission. Please pray for these young leaders, like Miguel (and his family) in the picture below, and Norma, who is part of our church and preparing to be a missionary among the indigenous in Bolivia.

Please pray for us as we adjust to new rhythms, say goodbye to some missionary friends who needed to return to their home countries for different reasons, and look to the Lord, who calls us to be with HIM (Mark 3:14), and that we would be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor 15:57) because of the sure hope we have in Christ each day and for eternity! I (Mike) was reminded of the call to persevere: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).

Whatever you may be facing, may you consider the trial pure joy, and may the Lord form you into a steadfast son or daughter who joyfully abounds in His work.

Captions for pictures below:

1st: Ice Cream Social with Amparo Girls before the baby was born! We were encouraged to learn one of the Amparo staff founds lots of handwritten bible verses at the head of one of the girls' beds at the Home! Pray that God's word bears fruit in their lives!

2nd: Skip (Alteco Missionary), Miguel (young indigenous leader), and Mike at Chochís at the Indigenous Leaders Conference that we mentioned in our last newsletter!

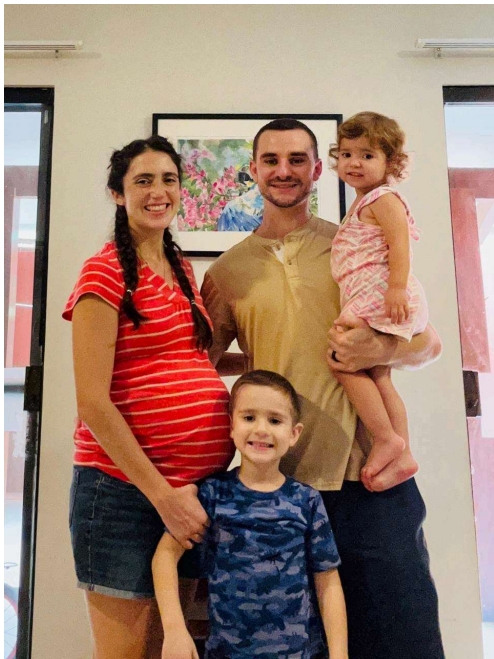
3rd: Moses has started playing basketball here in the neighborhood - this is a picture from the recent father's day event. Please pray the Lord uses us to be salt and light with the other families there!

4th & 5th: Before and after Matthias came out to meet us!

6th: We celebrated 9 years of marriage at a tasty Japanese restaurant! Yes...there is a Japanese population in Bolivia!





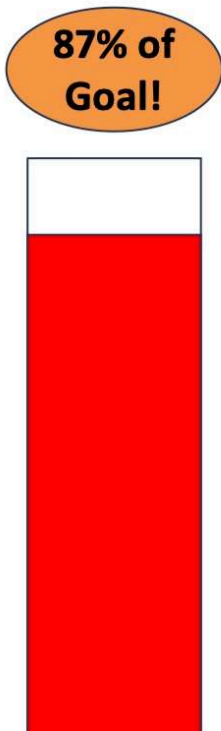




Praises and Prayer Requests:

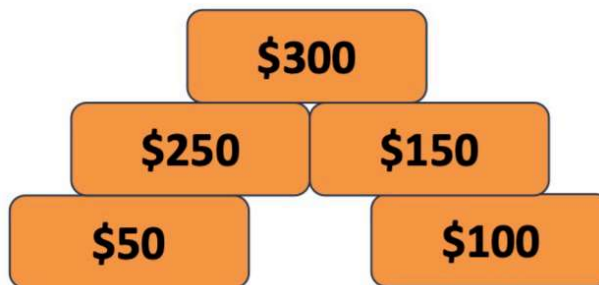
- Praise God for Baby Matthias and His favor in the birth (the hospital was 90 minutes away and we had no problems getting there on time, the older kids did very well with trusted friends while we were away, and although Matthias initially had low oxygen and blood sugar, and had to stay another night in a different hospital, all is well now and he seems to have no ongoing effects according to our doctors!)
- Praise God for using his people - we have been so supported by our local church family, missionary community, and our good friend Hannah who came down to visit us and help with kids and baby adjustment for a week!
- Praise God for what He is doing in the lives of people in our church - providing for needs, drawing people to Himself even in hard and painful circumstances, and raising up leaders.
- Praise God for what He enabled our fellow SAM missionaries to do during these past few years!
- Pray for us to faithfully shine the light of Christ wherever we go - including at Moses' basketball practices!
- Pray for God to work in the lives of the Amparo Girls and staff to bring healing and hope in Christ through His Word and Gospel

- Pray for God to raise up men and women who will follow Him, using their gifts to make disciples, lead movements, plant churches, and faithfully lead and serve their families!
- Pray for us to abide in Christ as we seek to encourage pastors and leaders, while serving in the strength that God supplies!
- God seems to be opening up doors in an amazing way for prison ministry - please pray for that in the coming weeks and months for churches in Bolivia!



Total Support Received on Average over last 12 months:	\$ 88,579
Total Monthly Support Needed:	\$ 101,736

Partner with us to build up the church in Bolivia!



Our growing family, plus economic inflation and other factors, means we also need to raise more support! *Would you consider partnering with us on a regular basis?*

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Give to support the Gospel Ecosystem Movement

You may also **make a check payable to South America Mission** and write our account number "**Account #10548**" (for support for us as a family) or "**Account #77474 Gospel Ecosystem Bolivia**" in the memo

line and mail it to SAM's US office:

1021 Maxwell Mill Rd, Suite B, Fort Mill, SC 29708.

**Thank you so much for your prayer, encouragement, and partnership
with us in the Gospel! To God alone be the glory!**

South America Mission

486 East Park Avenue, Elmhurst
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