

# Celebration of Life

Monday, January 9th, 2023  
First Baptist Church  
Jefferson City, Missouri

## Order of Service

Prelude/Preludio..... Praise Band  
Welcome/Bienvenida ....Melissa Hatfield & Roxy Antonio (interpreter)  
Hymn ..... “Because He Lives/Porque Él Vive” Praise Band  
Scripture Reading/Lectura Bíblica .....John 11:20-27  
Pastor, Hazael Rodríguez & Alan Earls  
Eulogy/Elogio ..... Pastor, Melissa Hatfield & Pastor, Noe Ángel  
Hymn ..... “When the Roll is Called Up Yonder/  
Cuando Allá se Pase Lista” Praise Band  
Family & Friends Remarks .....Pastor, Otoniel Calderón,  
Omar Segovia (interpreter)  
Hymn .....“One Day at a Time/Un Día a La Vez” Praise Band  
Special Music/Música Especial ..... “It is Well With My Soul”  
Judi Mendoza  
Biblical Reflection & Legacy of Mauricio Vargas  
Dr. Luis M. Mendoza & Josiah Mendoza  
Immediate Family Remarks ..... Family Members (interpreter)  
Prayer/Oración.....Pastor, Samuel González & Omar Segovia  
Postlude/Postludio..... Praise Band

## PSALM 100

*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.  
Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.  
Know that the Lord is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.  
Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.  
For the Lord is good  
and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues  
through all generations.*

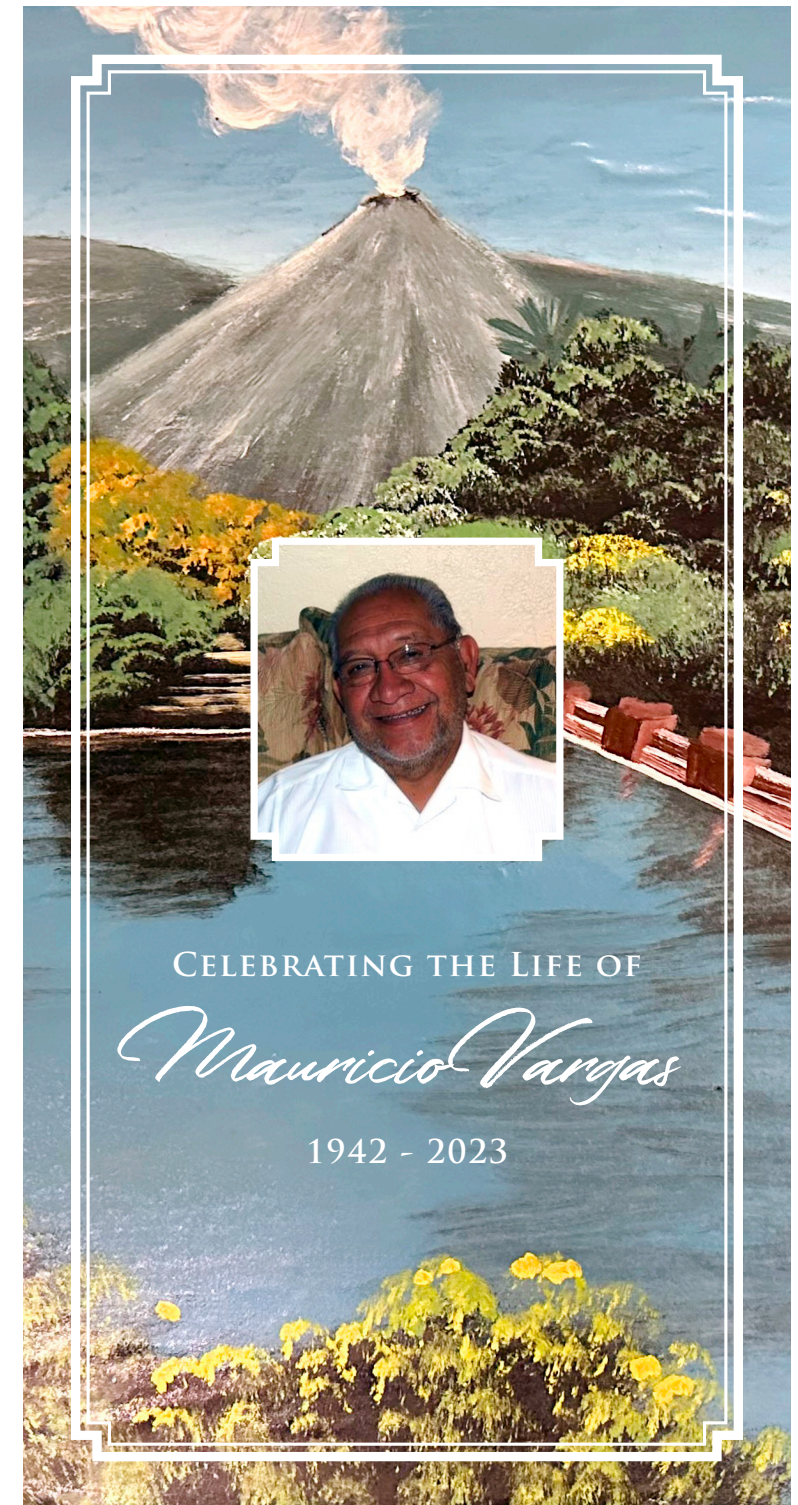
## MATTHEW 28:19-20

*Therefore go and make disciples of all  
nations, baptizing them in the name  
of the Father and of the Son and of the  
Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey  
everything I have commanded you.  
And surely I am with you always,  
to the very end of the age.”*

## In Appreciation

Mauricio's family wishes to express their sincere appreciation for the thoughts, prayers, and many acts of kindness extended to each of them during this time.

**Freeman**  
MORTUARY



# Remembering Mauricio

Rev. José Mauricio Vargas entered this world without a cry on November 17, 1942, in Sonsonate, El Salvador, the son of Isaias Vargas and Margarita Arrazate Vargas. Family lore says they had to pinch him to be sure his lungs were developed and force a cry from him.

Isaias was the crew leader and steam locomotive mechanic at a local train yard where Mauricio made many trips to deliver lunches to his father where he would admire the machinery in wonderment. This boyhood admiration would later translate into a collection of electric trains. Margarita was a fierce supporter of her family, community, and local church. She had a spirit of determination that was passed along to Mauricio and it served him well.

As a young man, Mauricio met B.W. Pitchford, an American businessman who offered him the opportunity to come to the United States. He accepted this offer and made the trip to Baton Rouge with little more than a suitcase and the shirt on his back. Once settled into the home of B.W. and Lila Pitchford, he attended LSU to study the English language. Mauricio went on to Southern Baptist College where a special business student, by the name of Carolyn Pavey, caught his eye. Their initial fondness for one another blossomed into love, and they traveled to Carolyn's family home in Jacksonville, Fla. to be married on June 1, 1968. Mauricio went on to earn his bachelor's degree from Ouachita Baptist University. In 1968, he and his bride then accepted an opportunity to visit New Orleans, La. to do mission work for the summer. It was here Mauricio finished his education, earning his master's degree in Christian Education from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1971. He was passionate about his involvement with the New Orleans Seamen's Ministry, dedicating his time to visit ships and ministering to the men and women aboard.

Their time in Louisiana came to a close when Mauricio was contacted about a need for a Spanish teacher and soccer coach at Vandalia Christian School in Greensboro, NC. During his time there he became involved with the North Carolina Youth Soccer Association, coached the Vikings to a State Championship victory, and was voted Teacher of the Year.

When a position needed to be filled at the Wesleyan Academy in Kernersville, NC, Mauricio, again, answered the call. There he began teaching biology, government, and other social science courses as well as coaching soccer and basketball. Mauricio was proud to have been asked to coach the soccer team playing in the North Carolina

Bicentennial celebration, an offer he excitedly accepted.

The trajectory and focus of Mauricio's life shifted when a local Mexican man passed away and, being a local Spanish speaker, the church where the young man was buried asked Mauricio to begin ministering to the migrant community. Mauricio continued to minister to the Spanish speaking community in his area and even spent hours playing songs of praise on his accordion in the tobacco fields of North Carolina. When word of his community outreach was discovered by the Baptist Convention, they asked him to begin working full time as a pastor. The final Vargas family destination in North Carolina was Fayetteville, where Mauricio made connections during pick up soccer games with soldiers stationed at Ft Bragg. Those relationships eventually turned into the foundation for the first church started in Fayetteville by Mauricio. A church which is still active today.

From that point on, he traveled all over the United States planting churches in many states. By this time, all four of the Vargas children had come into the world. Finding a balance between his service as a pastor, traveling to plant churches and being home with his family wasn't easy. He had to get creative. Mauricio would often forgo the offer of air travel and instead brought his family of six along for unforgettable road trips including a cross-country adventure in their burnt orange Chevy Chevette.

In 1987, the Vargas family relocated to Missouri and Mauricio worked with congregations of many different language groups through his work as the Missouri Language Director with the Missouri Baptist Convention. Mauricio was instrumental in introducing the Word of God into the hearts of countless individuals throughout his lifetime. He touched the lives of innumerable people and widened God's table through his ministry.

He had the opportunity to take many mission trips around the world and felt blessed to be able to return to his home in El Salvador to minister to the community he had come from and help build churches and homes there. He trained pastors in Central America and through those experiences, their local congregations increased greatly. A ministry that continues to the present day. In his retirement, Mauricio was the Pastor of Enon Baptist Church in Russellville, Mo. Even through the challenges of Covid 19, Mauricio did whatever necessary to minister to his congregation, including preaching from a flatbed trailer outside to abide by health and safety guidelines.

He was a member of countless Boards, Committees, and Associations, as well as the Missouri Baptist Convention. While he was awarded and honored from multiple people groups; it was not his

intention to be recognized. He gave all honor and glory to the Lord every time. Mauricio was passionate about community involvement and studied political science to deepen his understanding of the systems in place in the U.S. He was an advocate for social justice, women in ministry, and minority groups. He had a gift of focusing on the Lord's work without the distractions of politics or posturing.

Mauricio's greatest blessing in life was his family. Him working so hard to serve others throughout the year meant that annual summer vacations to Daytona Beach were well protected. It was the family's chance to be present with one another and enjoy time together. Over the years they have added more space to the vacation accommodations to hold their growing family. A welcome adjustment as far as Mauricio was concerned. He adored his grandchildren and relished time spent with them.

Mauricio lived his life with strong faith and a humble heart. He was gentle, loving, and playful with a silly sense of humor. He spent his time on Earth naturally loving his fellow man and genuinely serving all people. He sprinkled loving kindness everywhere he went. Mauricio was a man who didn't need grand gestures to make an impact, he could calm an angry fight with a whisper and demonstrate the love of Christ by the actions of his daily walk. He helped the helpless, loved the unloved, and exemplified a faithful and loving husband, daddy, papa, brother, pastor, mentor, and friend.

On Sunday January 1, 2023, this world could no longer contain the spirit of Mauricio Vargas. He left his world as he came, without a cry. He passed in a whisper. He transitioned from holding the hand of his bride into the arms of our Savior and was greeted with the words "Well done, good and faithful servant".

Those who will cherish his memory include: his beloved wife, Carolyn Vargas; four children, Carolyn "Carrie" Marie Johnston (husband, Brent) of Paragould, Arkansas; Julia Margarita Vargas of Kansas City, Mo., Dulce Fay Stevens (husband Bryan) of Jefferson City, Mo., and Mauricio Isaias "Cito" Vargas (wife, Abby) of Springdale, Ark.; four siblings, Margoth Estrada, Estella Belloso, Lydia Segura (husband, Rafael), and Luis Vargas (wife, Margaret); one sister-in-law, Sylvia Vargas; and seven grandchildren, Felipe Vargas, Kadyne Massey, Jackson Stevens, Sebastian Stevens, Isaias Vargas, Lydia Vargas, and Olivia Vargas. He was a beloved tio to many nieces and nephews.

He is celebrating in Heaven with his parents; one brother, Mario Vargas; two brothers-in-law, Antonio Estrada and Enrique Belloso; one niece, Sylvia Janet Riordan; and a host of people he introduced to our God.