January 2026

Frontera de Gracia. Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico across from El Paso, Texas.

"There are more than ten thousand waiting at the border."

Last month, I had the opportunity to spend time with leaders and pastors in Ciudad Juarez. It is a slow time at the border this time of the year. It seems that no people are trying to cross the border, and a lot of people are rushing to the stores to buy presents and get ready for Christmas and New Year 2026.

When I spoke with shelter leaders and pastors, we reflected that 2025 began with a lot of unknowns for migrants and shelters. People were getting ready to cross the border legally. Many of our own shelters had already made appointments to meet the Border Patrol in one of the five bridges that connect Mexico and the USA. Suddenly, at the end of January, no one was able to cross. Legal pathways were closed. The disappointment and desperation among our families grew louder. Our shelters that were almost empty now were filled with people who wondered what the next step for their American Dream would be.

At the end of 2025, we look back. Many of the people at the border have tried to return to their home country, but many others have begun to wait in cities of Mexico and see what will happen in the next year or years. Interestingly, some people even began to wonder seriously about the "Mexican Dream." They bought their first motorcycle to become one of the thousand workers delivering goods and food in the city. They began to rent their own places and wait perhaps two or three years, and see what God has in store for them in this border of the City of Juarez.

Frontera de Gracia can host between 45 and 50 guests. At the end of the year, we have between 15-20 guests, most of them from Venezuela and Mexico. The lower number of guests allows us to think seriously about renovating our church/shelter of Frontera de Gracia. We began to rewrite and revisit our old notes and update the cost of renovating this place. While this is a difficult time for migrants,

it is the right time for us to invite our friends to dream with us. We hope that next year—2026—we can start inviting people to visit and help us to get ready for those who will come and wait in this city.

Today, several of the local shelters are closed. Even the biggest one that belongs to the government is closing, so they asked their guests to leave as soon as possible. Some migrants have returned to their country. (We don't know if they have been successful in their quest to return.) Others have begun to establish themselves in the City of Juarez. Migrants have to decide if they should stay or go.

I asked our leaders and pastors at the border to imagine it with me. (I know this is hard to imagine right now.) What would happen if the U.S. government opens the border here in Ciudad Juarez/El Paso in the next two days? Would people show up? How many people will come? This question isn't coming from nowhere. The U.S. government has opened the door before. There was silence for a couple of seconds, and then one of them said, "if today the U.S. government opens the doors, tomorrow it will have TEN thousand migrants at its door." Another pastor said, "Migrants will sell or give away their belongings and will bring all their families and line up at this border." Another leader said that other people from other cities will do the same and will try to be at the border as soon as possible. We would see many people waiting at the border? *Si, muchos! Yes, a lot!*

After I visited the leaders and pastors in Juarez, I began to wonder what I would do if I were one of those waiting at the border. Would I return to my country, maybe Venezuela or Cuba, with shame and a broken heart? Or, with shame and a broken heart, would I wait in Mexico, not knowing when the opportunity to cross legally will show up? Would I wait many years, even though I can't guarantee there will ever be another opportunity for me? Or perhaps, do as others are doing, trade the American Dream for the Mexican Dream, and try to establish myself in Mexico? The Mexican dream might sound good for some but for other families this will mean waiting longer, children, parents, and relatives will have to wait to see their loved ones in the U.S. How long can we wait, Lord?

En Cristo Jesus,
Angel

- Pray for those waiting at the border, wondering about their future and their families.
- Pray that our pastors, leaders, and local shelter staff can rest during Christmas and the New Year. Pray for their plans as we await the new year of 2026.
- Pray for Frontera de Gracia renovation, that we could raise all the necessary funds and begin to rebuild our church/shelter soon. You can give to this project here.