

Greetings in Christ from the Dominican Republic!

This year has been one of many, many, changes for us, both in our mission, with the renting of two new locales, construction projects, and also in the area of personnel changes, with the arrival in February of Deaconess Rachel Powell, Deaconess Gail Ludvigson, Pastor Joel Fritsche and family, then the goodbye in July of GEO missionary Ruth Pollex, then, at the end of July, the arrival of Business Manager Blake Warren and family, and also of Pastor Sergio Maita and family, and finally, at the end of August, another family arrived - the Baumgartners! On top of this, within the country, Deaconesses Danelle Putnam and Katie Ziegler moved to Santo Domingo, and Deaconess Christel Neuendorf took up the new position of Missionary Care. Needless to say, it has been a busy year of transitions!

Please let us introduce you to the new members of our Dominican Republic mission family:



Deaconesses Rachel Powell and Gail Ludvigson at their installation in the DR



Pastor Joel Fritsche, church planter in Santo Domingo & wife, Clarion, sons, Slav, Sergei, and Andrei



Pastor Sergio Maita, church planter in Santiago area & wife, Yoxandris, and daughter, Irene, from Venezuela



Blake Warren – new Business Manager for Latin American and the Caribbean Region - along with wife, Lizz, and daughters, Abby and Rachel



Pastor James & Brittany Baumgartner and daughter, Nora, new missionaries to Latin America, residing in Santiago for 4 months of language training

## Update on missions

At our mission in Pueblo Nuevo we moved to a new locale in March. The new ground-floor location has helped with accessibility and presence, and by the looks of it, we will need to move to another location soon, with the store front church already tight for space. A summer day camp for the neighborhood children was a real church family effort, and 2 young boys were baptized at the end of the summer! Praise God!





In the capital, Santo Domingo, we found and rented a large older house which serves as a new office for the south of the island, and more importantly, a new place to start a church! Work was also done last year to finish the church sanctuary in Las Americas (perimeter wall, kitchen, outer church wall). Alongside the arrival of Pastor Joel Fritsche – who preached his first sermon ever in

Spanish this summer, GEO missionary Tyler McMiller, on route to serving in Mexico, served for a few months in Las Americas where he helped to instruct the youth in guitar and piano lessons, for Divine Service



In Licey, June brought to a close the end of the second year of Concordia Lutheran Preschool - a school year that was bursting at its seams with 80 children in four classrooms. On Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, we broke the ground at the site of the new school and church,

just around the corner of the current site, and began construction on the 8<sup>th</sup>!



On August 17<sup>th</sup>, the 2015-2016 school year began, with housing still in the old locale, and with the addition of an afternoon schedule, there are now 120 students at the school!

In Palmar Arriba, the church, school and group home continue to be a close knit community. The church members are growing in their sense of being a church family – taking on projects together, such as repainting the church, on their own accord. At Concordia School in Palmar Arriba, we welcomed a new principal, Mildred (also a member and studying to be a deaconess of the church).

## Preparation of church workers

The seminarians continue to study online with the Concordia Seminary in Argentina. Idjon, who has been working as a chaplain at our Lutheran school in Palmar Arriba, was installed as a vicar in February. Lord-willing he will become our second Dominican Pastor. Yban, our seminarian in Licey, is working hard at the preschool as a chaplain, in addition to his theological studies (and recently graduated from university and has a family!).





Six intensives a year supplement their on-line courses, with professors visiting in person. We also have four new men interested in pre-seminary studies. Praise God!

Alongside the seminarians we have 18 deaconess/deacon interns continuing in their studies, representing all of our mission sites. They are making visits, taking food to the poor from church offerings, caring for people with disabilities and showing Christ's mercy wherever they go. These men and women are a real force for mercy and of tremendous benefit to our

communities as we continue to give witness of Christ to those who suffer, are deprived, and in need.

### Good Shepherd Lutheran Homes Foundation

The six children in our orphanage are thriving. They love welcoming visitors into their home and are ready to share hugs and smiles. We are thankful too that we have the capacity to branch into a new area of work in Santo Domingo, in a government ward for neglected people with disabilities, by training staff and updating the facility. The foundation also facilitated the outfitting of wheelchairs for 4 members of the government ward and for others in need in our missions, including members of our "Amigos de Jesus" group which serves children and families with disabilities. Our long term goal includes planting a church in this area.



### Mercy Houses

Our 4 mercy houses (clinic, preschool, primary school and orphanage) sit alongside our churches. As we receive Jesus through His preaching of the Word, so also we show mercy through our institutions (corporately) and in caring for our neighbors in their body (vocationally). We are privileged to be able to speak of Jesus in serving those in need as there is no

separation of church and state. For example, in the two Concordia schools, daily devotions begin the school day and a weekly service of the Word is held. Additionally, every Thursday, deaconesses teach the faith in our Concordia School and then go to the public school to teach the Christian faith as well. Yet another example is that in our group home, all are baptized and attend Divine Service and vespers weekly, among many other activities.



## Mission Work in Latin America

Mission work is growing, not just in the Dominican Republic, but across the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Region (and Spain!). We praise and thank God for the workers He has raised up to go and preach and teach the gospel, to share Christ's mercy with others and gather all unto Christ. Just 4 years ago, there were 14 LCMS missionaries, and alliance missionaries, serving in the LAC region. Now, at our most recent missionary retreat, held here in the Dominican in early August, we rejoiced that there are now 30 missionaries serving (plus families), and 8 currently fundraising, preparing to head to the field. Praise God for His great goodness.

### And now – LAC Retreat August 2015

#### Then...2011



In case you are curious, today missionaries now serve in:

Puerto Rico – 2 Pastors (church planting)

Jamaica – 1 Alliance Pastor (from Nigeria) (church planting)

Cayman Islands – 1 Pastor (church planting)

Mexico – 1 GEO missionary, 2 Pastors en route (theological education & church planting)

Nicaragua/Honduras – 1 Pastor, 1 Deaconess (overseeing pastors and deaconesses)

Belize – 1 Pastor and 1 church worker en route (church planting)

Uruguay – 1 Pastor (church planting)

Peru – 3 Pastors, 1 Deaconess, 1 Pastor and 1 GEO en route (church planting)

Spain – 1 Pastor, 1 Pastor en route (church planting)

Dominican Republic – 2 Pastors, 1 Alliance Pastor (from Venezuela), 3 Deaconesses, 1 vicar, 1 GEO missionary, 1 Seminary Deaconess, 1 Pastor en route (theological education & church planting)

LAC Regional Staff, located in the Dom. Rep. – 1 Business Manager, 1 Project Manager, 1

Communications, 1 Creative Outreach Specialist, 1 Deaconess for Missionary Care

Additional support staff: Area Overseers – 3 Pastors, Establishing Lutheran University - 1 Pastor, Pastoral Visitor and Editor – 1 Pastor

### Prayer Requests

- For Mount Horeb Medical Clinic and Amigos de Cristo Lutheran Church in Las Americas.
- For Concordia Lutheran School in Palmar Arriba and Concordia Lutheran Preschool in Licey, and staff.
- For our seminarians, vicars, and deaconate and their studies
- For our Foundation, Good Shepherd Lutheran Homes, our group home and the children.
- For Christ-centered preaching.
- For our mission team and all new missionaries preparing to serve in Latin America.