



A note from LCMS Missionaries James & Christel, October 2016

Homestretch

Slow progress goes by fast.

Prayers

- **Missionaries in process of supportraising:** [Jamielynn Tinkey](#), [Cullen and Jackie Duke](#), [Jonathan & Cheryl Naumann](#), [Jana Inglehart](#), [James Krey](#)
- **Christel's dad's health.**
- **New missionary orientation happening at the end November.**
- **Those who are in Bible study in Santo Domingo.**
- **Deaconess classes that Missionary Danelle Putnam continues to teach in Santo Domingo.**
- **Dominican Seminary preparations and transitions for professors and students.**

This summer was a unique part of our missionary and vicarage experiences. In many ways it felt like a hard slog forward, coming to the end of a long marathon, as projects and goals that were started long ago are reaching their critical phases and nearing completion or hand-off to others. In other ways, it felt like a blur, with several major events clipping by so fast that they were over before we'd had a chance to even process them.



In our ministry sites in Santo Domingo we have had an urban Bible study grow gradually towards a confirmation class, where I am teaching the book of Matthew chapter by chapter. So far, through the Bible Study, we have had 3 adult baptisms, and as the study transitions into a confirmation class, we



hope to have several people from the community celebrating the Lord's Supper with us soon.

Meanwhile, back at the church planting center in Ozama, we have been gaining traction with our team and getting well established, even as we struggle to get local outreach efforts to stick in the more middle-class community.



In Las Americas, our larger congregation outside the city limits, we have been focused on lots of little but important goals, such as greater theological solidity among our members, a stronger youth group, and the beginnings of church administration by our lay



members in order to support a pastor

- **And finally, please pray for a new group of pre-seminarians. These youth are the first generation of the church here in the D.R. They meet monthly for a special study designed for further theological study.**



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and properly administer the offerings of the congregation. The progress in Las Americas has been less visible and harder to put down into a series of points, but we have seen genuine and important growth in the congregation during the last several months.

The new baptisms and the growth that we have seen in the congregational bible studies and other events are the sorts of things that stand out in the long slow process of church-planting and have been a big encouragement to us during the extra challenges that come with living in two different cities on a weekly basis.

On a regional level, there have been some really important tasks lately that I've been working to get the VDMA project ready for its next several years. Within a week of writing this newsletter, the final devices should be delivered, leaving us with all the pastors in the region completely equipped and prepared for ongoing library support. In the next month, we will have locked in the next series of resources to be delivered, and in a few short months we will have delivered 20 crucial ministry books to each Lutheran pastor in Latin America! This quadruples the average pastoral library in Latin America and is something I am incredibly blessed of having been a part of.

As for the ongoing communication strategy for the region, I am preparing for the arrival of Jana Inglehart and James Krey.

There have been several major efforts as well regarding the establishment of a new seminary in the Dominican Republic, for which I will be providing the groundwork for the online component of the program which should serve an additional 40 seminarians throughout the region. Recently I've been a part of these efforts in order to establish a system



that will be effective for the first few years of the program until the seminary is fully able to integrate it into their staff.



This last week James had the opportunity to fill in for Rev. Charles St. Onge at his congregation in Montreal, Canada, Ascension Lutheran Church as he is currently on Home Service. Charles also serves as an Area Facilitator for Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, and Puerto Rico. Pictured above is Deb St. Onge at the Chinese teen Bible study that Charles usually leads. Ascension is home to three congregations only divided by language: French, English, and Mandarin.

Missionary comings and goings...



Over the last few months our Dominican team has said good bye and bienvenidos quite a few times. Starting from the top left, missionary and Vicar Paul Flo joined us at the end of September. He will be serving in Santo Domingo as a vicar after he finishes his orientation time in Santiago. Next is missionary Tyler McMiller (far left). Tyler had been serving in Mexico and just recently joined our Santo Domingo to serve with his wife and our good friend Yanela. On the bottom left is Deaconess Rachel Powell. We said goodbye to Rachel mid-October as she will be getting married in November. She will be greatly missed but we know we will remain close as good friends do! And finally the Preus family just joined our team after a long wait on their visas. Please keep all of these missionaries in your prayers as they transition into their new roles and vocations.