



joel.fritsche@lcmsintl.org

Sharing the Story on the Road



Coat of Arms from the flag of the Dominican Republic

DR FUN FACTS

“Catedral de Santa Maria La Menor” in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic is the oldest cathedral in the new world. It dates back to 1540. We have visited the cathedral a number of times in the historic colonial zone in our city. Also, part of the exterior of the cathedral is the backdrop of our new prayer card. Check it out at the bottom of page 2.



Catedral de Santa Maria La Menor



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, send an email message to joel.fritsche@lcmsintl.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.



Third Sunday of Easter at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Wisconsin. Pastor Fritsche (center) with Pastors John Schultz (left) and Nathan Meador (right).

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Greetings from the road. The Fritsche family is currently on home service (or furlough) back in the United States. Sorry you haven’t heard from us in a while. Life and work were a whirlwind in the weeks leading up to our April 6 departure for our home service tour to reconnect with a number of our supporting congregations. Since April 6, we have visited congregations and groups in Arkansas, Texas, Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin, and we’re only about halfway through our schedule. The whirlwind continues!

The weekend of April 29-30, we had the privilege of visiting the saints of St. John in Plymouth, Wisconsin. Senior Pastor Nathan Meador and I have numerous connections, including both having served as pastors at Zion in Staunton, Illinois. St. John’s has invested in the DR mission for a number of years, supporting our family as missionaries, but also sending short-

term teams to the Dominican, so it was a privilege to see a number of familiar faces. In addition to presenting, I was invited to preach on Luke 24, the story of the two men on the road to Emmaus.

In that sermon I emphasized that Jesus gave the two disciples a resurrection shout of Easter joy as He opened their minds to understand Him as the heart and center of Scripture and as He broke bread with them. It’s true for us as well. Our heads hang low in the sadness of our sin, our hopes so often crushed as we walk along the road. Our Jesus, who died, but is alive, comes to us in the Scriptures and the Breaking of the Bread, the Holy Sacrament, with a resurrection shout that He is alive. He fills us with His life and hope. It is that same resurrection shout that, by God’s grace, we preach in the Dominican. Thanks again for your amazing support in taking that resurrection shout to the ends of the earth! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Work continues on the new mercy center and seminary in the Dominican Republic

On Monday, May 8, our Dominican seminary faculty met for the first time with incoming students and the presidents of their respective church bodies from around Latin America.

I am honored to be serving as Director of Centro de Misericordia Seminario Concordia el Reformador, our new Dominican mercy center and seminary. One of the challenges of being on the road for home service is conducting meetings from a distance, especially one such as you see pictured here. Despite the challenges of coordinating a meeting where 20+ people are participating electronically from around Latin America, we had a very productive 2 hours introducing one another, the curriculum and details about visas, housing and the rest of our facilities.

These students are from several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela and Peru. Lord willing, they will arrive and begin classes in August of this year. They will receive solid instruction in theology



21st Century Meetings in the Mission Field

and ministry, with a particular emphasis in church planting.

As I have served the last 2+ years in the Dominican Republic as a church planter, serving alongside the one Dominican national Lutheran pastor that we have, I recognize and rejoice in what a blessing it is to have Dominicans serving Dominican congregations and planting new congregations in their country. Of course, as St. Paul says, God is the One who gives the growth. (1 Cor. 3:7)

In addition to their academics and classroom learning, students will serve alongside missionary pastors and our Dominican pastors in our mission congregations. Professors will be actively engaged in pastoring our church plants with students alongside them. Students will learn to work in a team setting with deaconesses and other missionaries.

The mercy center and seminary is located on the same campus as our Lutheran church and school in Palmar Arriba, near Santiago. Also on the campus is Hogares Luteranos el Buen Pastor, our group home for the developmentally disabled. Students will have ready access to these important opportunities for mercy work in school and institutional settings. Disaster response training for students and leaders will also be offered.

Please keep the seminary, its faculty, staff and students in your prayers. Also, please prayerfully consider a gift to support this project, specifically to assist with scholarships for these men in their pastoral formation. Gifts can be received online through the following link. <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/latin-america-seminary>

To God be the glory!!!

HOME SERVICE SCHEDULE



May 10 - St. John, Washburn, IL

May 11 - Redeemer, Peoria, IL

May 14 - St. Paul, Hamel, IL

May 17-18 - English District, Detroit, MI

May 21 - Our Savior, Milford, IL

May 28 - Zion, Columbus, OH

June 4 - Lord of Life, Plano, TX

June 5 - Our Shepherd, Haslet, TX

June 11 - Our Savior, Houston, TX

June 11 - Hope, Winnie, TX

June 13 - Return to the Dominican

To all of our wonderful supporters whom we are not able to visit due to geographical and time constraints, we sincerely value your partnership. Thank you for your continued prayers and support. We are happy to arrange visits and presentations by Skype in the months to come. Please let us know and we will get something scheduled.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Continued preparations to begin classes at the seminary on August 21st.
- Missionaries James & Christel Neuendorf and Tyler & Yanela McMiller as they transition from our field to Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne.
- Andrei as we do further testing related to growth hormone deficiency and determine a course of treatment. (see pic above)

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- The birth of Azariah Krey to Rev. Ted & Rebecca Krey.
- The Lord's protection throughout all of our travels during home service.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The amazing support that He has provided for us through all of you!



Family Life on the Road



Our family is blessed to reconnect with many of our supporters as we take the tiring yet exhilarating journey of home service.

For the Fritsche boys summer vacation has come a little early this year! They are having a great time reconnecting with family and friends, playing video games and eating American fast food.

TRAVELING

Home service is a wonderful opportunity to see old friends as well as meet new ones. It has been such a joy to visit with family and friends that we haven't seen in awhile. It has also been so nice to make new friends and visit congregations that haven't had a visit from us yet.

We are really blessed to be enjoying a month on the seminary campus in St. Louis as our home base as we travel around the midwest. The boys have relished the extra space and parks on campus. They have even made some new friends.

Along with the fun comes doctor appointments as well. We have had the chance to take Andrei to a pediatric endocrinologist and are anxious to see what develops as he has undergone several tests and will do even more in June. Andrei is a bundle of energy, but has only put on a couple of pounds in three years' time. The entire family got to visit the dentist as well. The boys and Joel dealt with this much better than Clarion did!

So, we have made it just beyond the half way point in our home service. We will be heading back to Texas in a couple of weeks to finish up with a few church visits and enjoy a bit more time with family. It has been a lot more tiring than we expected and we miss our Dominican home, teammates and friends. We look forward to returning to our church in Las Americas in June.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Stay tuned for what comes next in the life of the Fritsche family!

We are blessed to be serving our Lord in the Dominican Republic. The Lord is blessing the preaching of His Word and the administration of His sacraments. We are grateful for your partnership in this work. God bless you all!

In Christ,

**Rev. Joel & Clarion Fritsche
Viktor, Sergei and Andrei**



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of Joel & Clarion Fritsche, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861 or

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Rev. Joel Fritsche." Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/fritsche.

Mission Central
40718 Highway E16
Mapleton, IA 51034