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¿Qué Niño es Este?



Coat of Arms from the flag of the Dominican Republic



THANK YOU TO...

Zion Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio. Not only do they support us as a TIM partner congregation, but they have also recently invested substantially in our new seminary here in the Dominican Republic! Muchas gracias, hermanos y hermanas!

To learn more about the TIM program visit the website...

<https://www.lcms.org/TogetherinMission>



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Clarion and I visiting one of our Lutheran missions in Loma Cova, Panama

Christmas greetings from the Dominican Republic in the name of our Savior Jesus. Our third Christmas in the DR is just about upon us. For a missionary family, Christmas isn't necessarily the same as it was before we moved abroad. Traditions carry over from generation to generation and from place to place. For Clarion, having been born and raised in Panama and living there her entire childhood until she went to college, Christmases in the USA weren't the same as they were for her and her family for years in Panama. For me, Christmases in the DR aren't the same as the ones from my childhood, nor are they the same as the last several years before moving abroad. But one thing remains the same: "¿Qué niño es este?" What Child is this? Jesus is the constant amidst all of the differences. The Jesus we proclaim here in the DR is the Jesus Clarion knew in Panama, the Jesus of my childhood, and your Jesus too, the Son of God, born of Mary to save us

from our sins. Merry Christmas from us to you. We pray that you have a Jesus-filled Christmas!

Its been a full couple of months since you last heard from us. When is it not busy? Ha! In November we resumed our monthly pre-seminary Bible study now being held in our new mercy center and seminary building. We also took the seminary students and their families to the beach to spend a well-deserved (for them!) day off. One of the dear ladies from our congregation in Las Americas, Doña Maritza, fell and broke her leg a few weeks ago. She spent over two weeks in the hospital, but is now doing well. For me, it meant numerous hospital visits, including a couple of trips wandering the halls of the hospital to actually find her. That's an experience! Last month we also said goodbye to the Lohmeyer family who finished more than four years of service in our field. We will miss Bill, Nicole and the girls tremendously!

A blast from the past...

Just after Thanksgiving, we completed our first trimester of classes at the seminary. Clarion and I entrusted the three boys to the care of various missionary families and set off on a trip for several days to Panama. As I said earlier, Clarion was born and raised there. Her family left Panama in 1999 when ownership and administration of the canal was transferred to Panama. Almost 19 years later, Clarion was the first in her family to return and see how things have changed. It was a pleasure trip for us, but also a bit of work as I did some seminary relations along the way. I had the privilege to preach in two churches while there, one being the very church in which Clarion was baptized and confirmed. We were graciously hosted by LCMS

missionaries Rev. Brian and Amanda Gauthier. It was a nostalgic, whirlwind trip, but so wonderful to use our Spanish in another country and meet some dear saints of the Lutheran Church in Panama.

The new trimester has begun. I am teaching only one class so that I can devote myself to more administrative tasks, especially promoting the seminary in our Latin American field. But I am teaching what I love, Hebrew! It's a bit of a challenge as my brain still wants to go from Hebrew to English, but so far so good. The month of December also saw the completion of our solar panel project at the seminary. Thanks be to God, we now have clean, reliable, 24/7 energy at our facility.

Thank you to the many generous donors who have made this possible. This is a huge blessing for us and our students for years to come!

I continue to serve Thursdays through Sundays at Amigos de Cristo in Las Americas, Santo Domingo. I'm so grateful for our Vicar, Paul Flo, who keeps things going there during the week while I'm occupied with seminary responsibilities. One of the constants we are trying to keep going on Saturdays is a time for visits in the community. Every Saturday afternoon, two or three members, a sem student or two and I head out to make visits. We spend a couple hours going from house to house, visiting, sharing Scripture, a prayer and blessing with people in our community. It's incredible to see how open people are to sit and visit, have coffee, hear God's Word and pray with us. Please pray that our visits will be fruitful and open up new relationships. We had our congregational Christmas lunch last Sunday after Divine Service. God blessed us with a number of visitors that day. In the New Year we have a lot of new visits to make!

Thank you for your prayers, love and support as we labor in the Lord here in the DR. Merry Christmas to you all!!!



Joel preaching at El Redentor, Balboa, Panama



Vicar Paul and sem students in a Bible study with our youth in Las Americas

Pastor Joel Fritsche

GETTING TO KNOW OUR MEMBERS...

Last month we introduced you to one of our Dominican seminary students. This month we'd like you to meet Jaqueline Belen, one of the members of our congregation, Amigos de Cristo in Las Americas. Jackie and her husband were one of the first couples married in the congregation. Their kids were among the first baptized and confirmed in the congregation. She is a wife, mother of four, and also studying to be a deaconess. She and her family live across the street from the church. Jackie is in charge of seeing that the church is cleaned regularly by our

members. She is at the front of many of our church activities, cooking, cleaning, but most importantly, very active in God's Word and Sacrament, regularly present in Divine Service and Bible studies. The picture on the left was during recent Saturday visits at a member home. Two children from the community walked up and jumped up on her lap. She is dearly loved in our church and in our community. Jackie is mother to Miguel, one of our pre-sem students, who we pray in the years to come will be another Dominican Lutheran pastor.



Updates from the Missionary Wife

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- The Lohmeyers, as they get settled in the USA.
- Doña Maritza Bautista, as she recovers from a broken leg, that she would be back on her feet soon.
- Our continued evangelistic efforts, including regular weekly visits in Las Americas.
- Rev. Brian and Amanda Gauthier and their missionary work in Panama.
- Fellow missionary family, the Maitas, as they mourn the loss of their baby last month.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Wonderful celebrations of our Lord's birth in all of our DR mission congregations!

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- Pastor Willy's health is improving and he is gradually becoming more involved again at Las Americas.
- Joel's dad's dialysis is on hold for now since his creatinine levels have been good. We've had a great visit with Mom and Dad here in the DR over the holidays.



Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año Nuevo.

Christmas greetings to you all! It is a joy to greet you once again from the Dominican Republic. The holiday season has come, and with it fun and excitement.

I could hardly contain my excitement as we began December with a trip to Panama. Every day was incredible and went too quickly. We are extremely grateful for our fellow missionaries who took such good care of our boys while we were gone. Without them, the trip would not have been possible. They are truly our family here in the D.R.

We have also enjoyed having Joel's parents visit for the holidays. There has been cookie baking, carol singing, game

playing, and movie watching fun for all. Visitors truly make the season bright!

The boys and I have been working with the other missionary children on a Christmas program for Christmas Day (see pic on the left). I have been helping direct and have really enjoyed the opportunity to work with the kids. I realized how much I miss working on a Christmas program every year. It fills my heart to see and hear my boys telling the Christmas story (in Spanish, no less)

This is our third Christmas here in the DR and we have celebrated each in a different home. This is very characteristic of missionary life! It still amazes me that we are so well provided for despite all the changes that occur on the field. God is truly good.

God is good and I praise Him for His faithfulness. Changes in country, home, job, and coworkers are things we deal with every day. However, the glorious message of Christmas stays the same. As the angels sang that night "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all the earth"

Clarion

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:

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