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Coat of Arms from the flag of the Dominican Republic

BIG NEWS!!! SEMINARY LIBRARY BOOKS HAVE ARRIVED IN THE DR!!!



On Saturday, November 23rd, after two years of collecting books for our library, the container finally arrived on our doorstep at the seminary in Palmar Arriba. THANK YOU to all who have donated books, money and time for our library! Now the work of organization and setup begins! Stay tuned!!!



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.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Can you believe that it's already time to light the second Advent candle? This is the reality of life in our fast-paced world. Even here in Latin America, where things tend to move a bit slower, we press onward, waiting and watching for our Lord Jesus to come. The women of our congregation in Pueblo Nuevo just finished making Advent wreaths to take home for family devotions.



Ladies group Advent wreath project at Pueblo Nuevo

Since our return from home service, we've jumped right back into ministry in Pueblo Nuevo. We have two new seminarians, Hector and Josué, working with us. They join Vicar Mario, Deaconess Caitlin, Clarion and I for our work in the church and community around our mission. New seminary students mainly observe during their first semester of field work. But these guys have taken a very active role in the regular ministry of the congregation. We are pleased to officially have Clarion on the team. Her work in Pueblo Nuevo is part of her practicum for the deaconess program in Ft. Wayne.

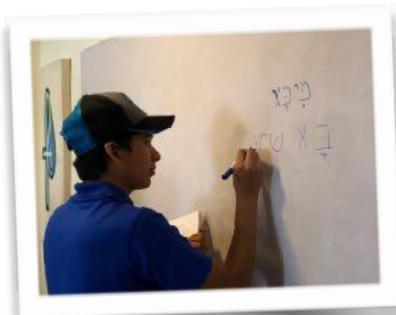
If you remember, three families of our church lost their homes in a devastating fire back in September. The Lord has been merciful, as all three have received assistance for reconstruction. One family is already in their rebuilt home with the

other two in process. It has not been easy, but it was an opportunity to learn how the Lord works through death and resurrection. Despite the stress and anxiety of a terrible tragedy, the Lord has worked tremendous blessings for these families and they are rising up not only with a new roof over their heads, but a lively faith that trusts our Lord who mercifully cares for us in Christ.

In late September we had our fall FORO and Yban Navarro was ordained as our third Dominican national pastor. In October, we celebrated the Reformation with a special Divine Service beginning with a procession through the community. It was followed by a potluck and a viewing of the 2003 Luther movie in Spanish. In between travels in October/November, the Pueblo Nuevo team and I have been visiting Doña Ana, one of our older members who has cancer. By God's grace, she is still with us, and can still receive the Lord's Supper with joy. But we are praying that the Lord will take her home soon. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

That brings us right back to December. We started a new Catechism class with about 10-12 new people to be confirmed on Easter. Advent and Christmas are often a challenge in new missions. In one sense, you have the blessing of starting from scratch with new Christians. On the other hand, this can make it difficult to establish traditions. Dominicans are used to Christmas being all about family. That's wonderful, but we ought not make that to the exclusion of the most important part, that our Lord came in the flesh and is coming again. Pray for us and for our people as we preach Christ incarnate, Christ crucified and risen in these holy days ahead. Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly!

The adventures of being a regional seminary Director!



Seminarian Josué practices his Hebrew penmanship!

As Director of a regional seminary that serves 19 countries, I spend a lot of time on seminary relations, that is communicating with partner churches and promoting the work of our institution throughout the region. That part of my job has taken me far and wide these past few months. Thankfully I had the month of September and the first part of October to get back into the swing of daily life at the seminary—preaching in chapel, teaching Hebrew, and of course, faculty and other administrative meetings. We have 15 residential students, 9 of whom are on campus, the other 6 on vicarage. I have all 9 of the residential guys who are on campus in Hebrew this year. With 6 of them being new, we've been moving slowly through Hebrew grammar, but the guys are super excited to be reading simplified readings from Genesis.

Thankfully, technology allows me to teach my classes even when I am on the road. In October I had the longest trip of my life. I was invited to Baguio City, Philippines to the International Lutheran Council's World Seminaries



Giving a presentation at the ILC world seminaries conference

conference. Being a new seminary, it was our first opportunity to stand next to other Lutheran seminaries and tell who we are and what we are doing. We are not a member of the ILC since we do not have a national church in the DR, but they graciously invited us to come given that we serve numerous ILC member church bodies from our region. I had the opportunity to give a presentation on our seminary, highlighting our focus of preparing pastors as evangelists/church planters. I am proud to say that this stood out as a unique emphasis as I heard presentations from sister institutions, both big and small.



With our two Mexico vicars at the Mexico FORO in Harlingen, TX

In early November I embarked on a two-week excursion throughout the region. We began along the US/Mexico border in Harlingen, Texas for the Fall Mexico FORO. At FOROs, we bring church partners together to strategize and collaborate on our common mission in a particular country. Alongside partners like the Lutheran Synod of Mexico, Ysleta Lutheran Mission, KIMA, and others, I represented our seminary, highlighting our work of pastoral and deaconess formation. I also had the opportunity to check up on our two Mexican vicars, Neftalí and Guillermo.

From Texas, Dr. Arthur Just and I took a long flight down to Chile for the FORO there. You may have heard of recent turmoil in Chile. Thankfully, despite disruptions in transportation, including burning bus stations, supermarkets and more, the Lord kept us safe throughout our time there. I



At the Lutheran Community Center in Valparaiso, Chile

gave a seminary presentation with updates on our current students from Chile. I visited with our Chilean vicar, Marcelo Rivas, attended the dedication of a new church sanctuary in Talca, and toured Valparaiso, Chile and the church, school and community center there. Valparaiso was devastated by fires just a few years ago. The Lutheran Church has done amazing work in response over the last several years, serving as a beacon of the Lord's mercy amidst destruction and much suffering.

From Chile we continued to Uruguay to visit the James and Angie Sharp missionary family. We were updated on an incredible project there of the efforts to open a Lutheran university in Montevideo. From Montevideo, we travelled by boat to Buenos Aires, Argentina to visit our sister church body (IELA) and seminary there. It was a fruitful visit as we talked about collaboration with Seminario Concordia and discussed the church planting projects of IELA. It's good to be home now doing my primary work on the ground in the DR. Have a blessed Christmas and New Year!

Pastor Joel Fritsche



With Dr. Sergio Schelske, Director of our sister seminary in Buenos Aires

Updates from the Missionary Wife

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Dofia Ana, member of Pueblo Nuevo, suffering from cancer and near death.*
- *The family of Rev. Charles St-Onge, whose father passed away recently.*
- *The people of Venezuela, especially of our sister church, the ILV.*
- *Seminary students as they take their end of semester final exams next week.*
- *Nini, Olga, Rosie and Mercedes, our deaconess students at Pueblo Nuevo.*
- *New catechumens in Pueblo Nuevo.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *Recent seminary graduate Yban Navarro (Dom. Rep.) was ordained on Sept. 22.*
- *Mercedes, member of Pueblo Nuevo and Director of our Lutheran schools, who recently celebrated her 60th birthday.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *The arrival of the seminary library books!*
- *You, our wonderful supporters!*



The older boys with their plates at Thanksgiving dinner at the office.

It's that time of year!! Everyone's getting ready for the holidays. We wish you much peace and joy this season.

Time stops for no one and has kept us marching to its steady beat. I am actually just finishing up my second round of deaconess classes and am looking forward to Christmas break. It has been a hectic time for me with Joel traveling quite a bit in November and adding two furry members to our family. We, sadly, had to say good bye to Dodger and Dandy after thirteen years of love and fun. Shortly after their passing we started over with two Weimaraner puppies named Axel and Ada. We had a rough start as they had to fight parvovirus but things are going very well now. We are having a ball with our new friends!

The boys are doing very well and are very excited to enjoy their Christmas break. Both older boys have finished their first trimesters with Wittenberg

Academy and have moved on to new classes for the Christmas term. They were very helpful to me and other missionaries as Joel was traveling. They are growing up very fast and it is interesting to see how they have adapted to missionary life.

Andrei is our force to be reckoned with. He took on the challenge of online classes and is keeping up very well. He has really enjoyed a new friendship with Diego, whose father is here studying at the seminary. He takes his injections every night and the doctor is very pleased with how he is growing. He and Joel spent Thanksgiving in the USA and had a great time! We are so grateful for our healthy boys. So many blessings we have to count this holiday season and all of our supporters are among them. We never forget what a special part you play in our lives here. Abrazos!

Clarion



The two newest members 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

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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.

OCT/NOV/DEC 2019 IN PICTURES

