



HELPING US TELL THE
 STORY



We were happy to have our colleague from our Latin America regional office in Uruguay to help us document the work we do and show life in Uruguay. Johanna Heidorn is a professional photographer who is working as a GEO missionary on our regional communications team. She followed us around and took lots of pictures which we will be able to share with you. One of the things I always forget to do is take pictures as I do the work so it was great to have Johanna to help us out. Look for her pictures in our newsletters and in the regional team's communications on Facebook and the web!



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Libertad o Muerte



One of the three national flags of Uruguay, “The Flag of the Thirty-Three,” flies at a farm in the interior. On the right, a kiosk in Montevideo sells all three national flags, as well as the black and yellow flag of the most popular soccer team, Peñarol.

Reformation Sunday this year was also Election Day in Uruguay. Uruguayans elect a new president every five years; a president cannot serve consecutive terms. Election Day is a big deal in Uruguay, where many people still remember clearly the days of the dictatorship and are proud of their transition to a peaceful democracy. In the last week of the election season, there were lots of people in the streets handing out literature, playing ads from loudspeakers mounted on trucks, and flying flags that represent the various political parties.

One of the flags that I saw a lot was one that doesn't represent a political party, the Flag of the Thirty-Three. This is the flag that the small band of “Orientals” (people from the eastern bank of the River Uruguay) were flying when they crossed from Argentina into Uruguay and started what would become the Uruguayan War of Independence. It was the red, white, and blue of the revolutionaries who gained independence in this part of South America, with the words “Libertad o Muerte” - Liberty or Death. The text for Reformation Sunday from John 8 also talks about “Libertad” - and muerte, as well.

Jesus tells the Jews who believed in him that if they continue in his Word, they are truly his disciples, and they will know the truth, and the truth will set them free. They don't understand and say that they have never been slaves to anyone. But if we sin, we are slaves to sin, Jesus says, and this slavery ends in death. Any type of freedom we try to create for ourselves is really just slavery to sin that leads to death.



There are two choices—Freedom or Death. All our works lead only to death. But, as Jesus says, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Pray that Jesus' words of freedom reach the hearts of the lost people of Uruguay, and they know real freedom through faith in Jesus Christ.

Scenes from God's Mission in Uruguay



Men's Bible Study meets in our front room. Ariel is telling the other men his story of immigration to Uruguay from Cuba.

IMMIGRANT MINISTRY KEEPS EXPANDING

Uruguay has become a major destination for immigrants from all over Latin America. In addition to Venezuelans who are fleeing the crisis in their country, Uruguay is receiving thousands of people from the Dominican Republic and Cuba. We have found that we can effectively reach these people (who in many cases are more open to church than native Uruguayans) by helping them navigate this new place. We now have people in the mission from five different countries. We are very thankful for this influx of immigrants to our mission and we pray that we continue to reach them with God's love.

ELIAS TAKES A CLASS TRIP

Elias just finished eighth grade and will start high school in the fall! Every year, school chaplain Pastor Christian Hoffmann takes a group of eighth graders on a visit to Brazil and Argentina. They visit the ruins of the Jesuit missions in southern Brazil and Misiones province in Argentina, stop at Lutheran churches and schools, and visit the famous Iguazu Falls at

the border of Brazil and Argentina. Elias was very excited to be able to go and see these things and had a great time hanging out with his classmates during the many hours on the bus! He got a chance to practice Portuguese and to eat Brazilian food, which he likes a lot.

CONCORDIA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION MOVES FORWARD

The Concordia Educational Foundation that operates the elementary and high school has made great progress on the new property that is being renovated to be a new upper school campus. It was an old watch factory and has a perfect layout for a high school. Contractors are working feverishly to get done in time for the new school year that begins in March, in the (Southern Hemisphere) autumn. This is an important step forward towards the anticipated opening of the first university-level courses in 2021, and we be of great benefit to our mission and church planting efforts.



The group from St Paul school with whom Elias went on the trip to Brazil



The building in Chapicuy keeps moving forward! It isn't done, but the members were anxious to get in and have worship in their own building!



Got my hardhat on, ready to check out how the construction of the new school campus is going!

Mission Updates

City Mission

We are really happy with the service of our new mission worker, Fernando. He can't replace the ministry of our deaconess, Valeria, who left to go to Chile, but he has many gifts and God is using him to advance the ministry at the City Mission.

I have been very happy with other changes I've seen since Valeria went to her new field of service. Other lay members have stepped up and stepped in to help carry on the ministry. These are good signs that show how the mission and its members are growing not only in numbers, but in spiritual maturity and leadership potential.

Chapicuy

The new building isn't quite done but it's done enough that the congregation has begun having services under the completed roof. There's still work to be done to finish it but thanks to a very generous grant from friends of the mission in the USA, the funds are secured to finish the building completely. By the end of the (southern hemisphere) summer, the building should be completely done. It has a large central area that will be used both for worship and other activities, a small apartment where we will stay when we go to the

mission (and that could be used for housing by a new pastor in the future until we get a parsonage built), and an



office and classroom. It is the first new church building built for the Lutheran Church of Uruguay since 1947 and is a visible symbol of the new growth God is granting to this church.

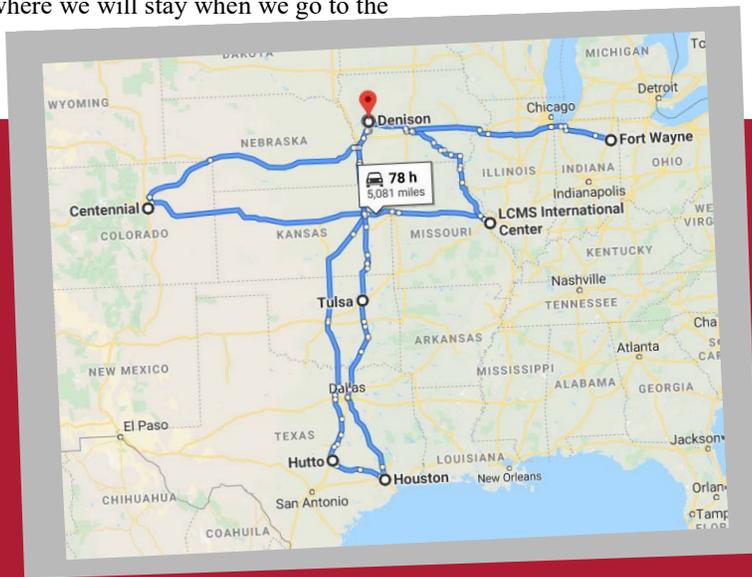
Prado

Children's Day and the spring version of our Special Bible School went very well and we were excited to see many kids and families who had never been to a worship service in attendance. Angie's team works very well together with the pastors, school staff, and Lutheran Hour Ministries staff to pull off

these great outreach events. Pray that we can effectively follow up with these families and that they would be incorporated into God's family in Montevideo.

New Mission Possibilities!

We are starting to get a concentration of people in the east Montevideo neighborhood of Malvín and in the town of Ciudad de la Costa in the neighboring department of Canelones. We thank Cecelia and Ingrid who are willing to host Bible studies in their homes. The team will have home Bible studies and explore if there might be spaces we could use or rent to begin outreach programs like English classes or children's activities. As God gives us growth, the goal would be the formation of another mission congregation in these areas. Pray that the members who participate would grow in faith and in boldness to witness and invite their friends and family members to see God's love for them revealed in the Holy Scriptures



We are back in the USA! We stopped in at the International Center for a Reconnect, and will preach and present at churches mostly in the Midwest. We will also go down to Texas to see Grandma and Grandpa Sharp.

*Dec 22—Zion Arcadia IA
Dec 25—Zion Denison IA
Dec 29—St John Charter Oak IA
Jan 5—St Mark Houston TX
Jan 12—Grace Tulsa OK
Jan 19—Immanuel Schleswig IA
Jan 26—St Peter's Fort Wayne IN*

If we are going to be in your area, let us know! We would love to visit with as many people as we can while we are home in the USA.

EMAIL CHANGE: There has been a change in our emails.... From now on we will be james.sharp@lcms.org or angela.sharp@lcms.org ... The old lcmsintl.org emails will be discontinued soon. Thanks!

Sharp *Family* News



Springtime is a great time for a walk in the Prado Park near St. Paul church & school.

PLEASE PRAY FOR US:

- Safe travels and a chance to rest and reconnect while back in the USA for Home Service
- Thanks for a great school year for the kids.
- Thanks for the new vicar from Brazil who will work with us in 2020.
- We still need a new location for the downtown mission, since we have outgrown the one we are in. It isn't easy finding a place that works for us, please pray for God to open a way for us.
- James' dad, Tom is still very weak. Pray also for mom, Linda, who is taking care of him, and brother Matt and sister-in-law, Regina, who do a lot, too.
- Thank God for peace and democracy in Uruguay and the peaceful elections and transfer of power, not a given in Latin America.

WITNESS ALWAYS



After two years of weekly instruction, Ambrose was confirmed along with seven of his classmates.

LOOKING FOR A HOUSE

When we get back to Uruguay, we have to move! We still aren't sure where we are going to end up, church folks are working on it while we are gone and we are hoping we will be able to move as soon as we get back. We are going to move downtown closer to the mission so we can be more dedicated to that ministry.

KID NEWS

The kids finished their school year a little early and unfortunately had to miss their year-end parties with their classmates and friends so that we could get back to start Home Service. They all did very well this year and we are very happy with their grades, citizenship, and especially their mis-

sionary understanding of their calling as kids and as students.

Elias finished eighth grade and is now officially taller than mom and dad. We are trying to figure out his options for high school, whether online, in Uruguay, or in the United States. Ambrose was confirmed and had his First Communion. We are very proud of how Ambrose invited his unchurched friends to participate, and after two years, the church has 5 new members (and their families) through Brose's work. Callie had the information class for confirmation instruction for next year and over 20 of her classmates accepted his invitation to attend with her. Pray that many of them would participate next year! Maggie is doing great in both Spanish and English and has turned out so far to be the most athletic of the four, enjoying team handball and soccer.

The kids were sad to miss their end of year parties but were very excited to be home in Iowa for Thanksgiving and Christmas and to see family and friends. They are doing a great job with all the traveling.

HOME SERVICE TIME

We are home in the USA until February 10th. While home, in addition to visiting supporters, we have a ton of shopping to do (almost everything is much more expensive in Uruguay, especially things like clothes and shoes for growing kids), check-ups to do, and mom and dad got new glasses.

We know we would not be doing this important work without your help.

For your prayers, support, and encouragement, THANK YOU!

Yours in the True Light,

*James, Angie,
Elias, Ambrose, Callie, and Maggie
John 1:9*



To support the LCMS through the work of James and Angie Sharp and family, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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

or

Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034

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."