



kathryn.phillips@lcms.org



Arepas handmade by Berkis, wife of seminarian Carlos.

CULTURE CORNER

This month I have enjoyed some wonderful Venezuelan food. My favorite is a tie between arepas and empanadas! Both foods are made out of a dough consisting of cornflour, water, and salt, and stuffed with meat or other tasty ingredients. My first arepa, we put eggs and cheese inside, like a breakfast sandwich. To make arepas, the dough is formed into a disk and pan fried. It is then sliced, similar to a sandwich to be filled. Empanadas are stuffed and closed before frying.

Berkis, the wife of seminarian Carlos, is teaching me how to make this food. Last week, I made them chili and we used the leftovers to put inside empanadas...blending the foods from two cultures.

Many Venezuelans are settling in Santo Domingo as they leave their home country due to the conflict there. We have many Venezuelans in our church, Pan de Vida. I get to learn the rich culture of Venezuela as I live here in the Dominican Republic.



To be added to or removed from this mailing list, or switch from USPS delivery to email, send an email message to kathryn.phillips@lcms.org with the word ADD or REMOVE in the subject line.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

— Romans 8:26-27



Deaconess students Kikie and Yaque teaching Sunday School at Amigos de Cristo. Every Sunday, a different child leads the opening and closing prayers, teaching and encouraging the children to pray regularly at home.

Romans 8 is a go-to part of the Bible for me because it is full of many beautiful reminders. I usually connect the above verses with times of anguish and frustration when you do not know what to pray. This month, I looked at these verses differently as I prayed out-loud in front of people for the first time in Spanish.

Before going on visits two weeks ago with deaconess student Kikie, we were talking about our plan for the day regarding visits. She said, "I'll read the devotion, and you can pray." I told her I was nervous. I had just had the same conversation with my missionary mentor who was encouraging me to start practicing praying out-loud in Spanish. Kikie responded with her own encouragement that God knows our prayers. I thought of these words in Romans. I do not know what to pray in Spanish. God searches our hearts. The Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for us. My weakness in this case, comes from a language barrier.

One of our visits that day was to a woman named Adreina. She has not been to church for about two years, but has family members who attend our congregation. Adreina welcomed us into her home. However, she stayed quiet throughout the visit and devotion. She opened up to us when we asked for prayer requests. She trusts that God hears our prayers. Kikie turned to me and asked me to pray, explaining to Adreina that I was nervous. It ended up being a beautiful example. Anyone can pray and the prayer does not need to be ornate. After I struggled through the words, Adreina reminisced about saying the Lord's Prayer with her mother while growing up. Kikie then connected the petitions of the Lord's Prayer to what is going on in Adreina's life, giving her more examples of prayer.



Coloring with Ramona in the group home.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Adreina in her marriage and as she looks for work
- The family of deaconess student Yaque, whose father died recently
- The new missionaries arriving to the DR for on-field orientation, Ashley Lehr and Tirzah Krey

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Comfort and peace throughout my weekly travels
- Patience in my Spanish studies

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many people who continue to encourage and support me, especially those who do so from afar.

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."

January Highlights

The beginning of January was a good time to reset and pick up momentum for the mission work after Christmas, New Year, and Epiphany. I am now in a rhythm to balance my time each week between Santo Domingo and Santiago. Most of my on-field orientation was spent with other new missionaries also coming to the LAC (Latin America, Caribbean, and Spain) region. We learned about general topics of the different missions around the region. Now that I'm diving into my own role, I am learning the specifics of the areas I am serving. It's a lot of information to take in, but I have a great team to guide me!

Deaconesses: Since I am working alongside the deaconess students in Las Américas, I have been brought into the conversation regarding the deaconess program throughout Latin America. While I am not teaching right now, it helps to know what these women have learned and still need to learn so that I can best support them and walk alongside them as we together continue to develop our skills as deaconesses. Right now, the region has women studying remotely through our seminary in the Dominican Republic (DR) from five countries: DR, Guatemala, México, Panamá, and Venezuela.

HLBP: I am continuing to settle in with my role in spiritual care at Hogares Luteranos el Buen Pastor (HLBP), our group home. I visit every Tuesday, and with each visit, I learn more about the kids. We have now planned out weekly devotions for Tuesday afternoons with Pastor Idjon (one of the pastors at the adjacent church in Palmar Arriba). I am working one-on-one with Randy, a teenager with autism in the group home. We focus on socialization skills and reading the Bible together.

Airports: I love airports! On January 12, I picked up two deaconess students from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis from the airport in Santo Domingo. They came to the Dominican Republic for one week to learn more about the missions here. It was exciting to welcome them to my home, show them around the churches in the Capital, go sightseeing, and reminisce about my first trip to the DR! This time I was the tour guide! The following Friday, I greeted new missionary, Ashley Lehr to the country, as she arrived at the airport in Santiago to begin her on-field orientation.

Thank you for being part of my support network. Your continued prayers and financial support encourage me daily. I cannot do this alone, but only with the help of God. Many of you have asked about Spanish learning and sent me encouraging notes. Thank you! I continue to improve in speaking and reading. I still have a long way to go in fluency, but I am able to hold conversations to communicate and coordinate work.



Joyfully Serving in Christ, Kate Phillips, Deaconess Intern

To support the LCMS through the work of Kate Phillips, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

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

-or through-
Mission Central
40718 Hwy E16
Mapleton, IA 51034

Gifts can also be given securely online:
lcms.org/phillips

-or-
missioncentral.us/phillips

Please include "Phillips-Dominican Republic Support" on the memo line of your check.

