



ONE MONTH ON THE FIELD!



The missionary team in Puerto Rico, provide care to the community.

UPDATE ON PUERTO RICO

Although I am enjoying my time in orientation in the DR, I am excited about my upcoming move to Puerto Rico. I am trying to learn as much as I can about the work going on there before I arrive. My missionary team there has been busy serving the community. Check out the articles below to see how God is working in my future home!

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/puerto-rico-disaster-response-team-in-right-place-at-right-time-to-help-the-hurting/>

<https://engage.lcms.org/puerto-rico-winter-2020/?fbclid=IwAR1UdtRpJSgzIBNNCQjf7VR1Hh8VwbFwvAP9cYkPYfJtOswzeRANfSQCDg>



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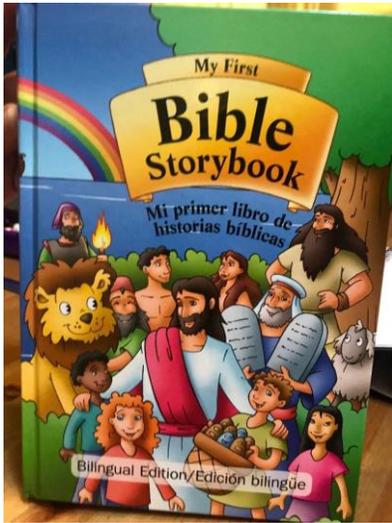
Left: Spanish excursion to see the Murals in Santiago.
Right: Celebrating one month with Paletas (Popsicles)



Greetings in Christ Jesus our Lord! February has been a busy first month here in the DR. This month has been focused on learning the Spanish language, the culture in Latin America, and what the LCMS is doing in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. My time thus far in the field has come with a wide range of emotions. The process of moving to the field and learning to live and work in a new place is crazy, exciting, fun, scary, and overwhelming. Through it all, I am continuing to grow in my faith and trusting God.

The bible verse that I have reflected on this month is Isaiah 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” There are times when learning a new language and learning to live in a new country is challenging, but I am reminded that God will help me and therefore I should not fear. At the beginning of the month, I was nervous about walking by myself to the office and other places in my new neighborhood. It was very intimidating to me. God keeps drawing me back to the words of Isaiah. Sometimes I would say this verse or similar ones in my head as I walked. What a great reminder that God is there with me through those challenges and the ones yet to come.

POCO A POCO (little by little)



The main focus of my average week is learning the Spanish language. I am in sixteen hours of Spanish classes each week. This includes in class learning at the office, a mix of cultural excursions around the city, and cooking classes to learn traditional meals from the DR and Puerto Rico. Each of my vocabulary and grammar classes begin with talking about what I did the day before, then I say a

prayer. I have learned how to say the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles Creed and Luther's Morning prayer in Spanish. I am starting to learn the Nicene Creed. I also read a couple pages out of a children's story bible. Each page has the words in Spanish and English. It is a wonderful way to learn Spanish and review the bible stories. It is very humbling going back to learning like a child again. Matthew 18 states that *"And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, 'Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven'"* (verse 2-4 ESV)

These classes are so important as I begin to build relationships with the people I am serving. The



language barrier is a big challenge in building these relationships. There are times after church or other events that people are in groups talking to each other. I pray that I am able to talk with them more than just basic phrases such as "Hola, ¿como estás? Yo estoy aprendiendo Español". ("Hello, how are you? I am learning Spanish."). I am grateful for the time I have in classes and I am slowly improving my language skills. In Spanish we say "poco a poco". (little by little).



Above: Spanish Excursion to the Oscar de la Renta Exhibit
Right: Cooking Tostones



WELCOMING A NEW FRIEND!

In February we were blessed to welcome a fellow new missionary, Tirzah Krey, RN. She is a career missionary serving as the Human Care Coordinator for Latin America. We are sharing many of the same experiences such as, going through orientation together, living in the same apartment, and taking Spanish classes together. It is wonderful to have a friend to share these experiences with. It is also wonderful to have a roommate to kill the bugs in our house for me.

Everything is an Adventure



Statue at the Botanical Garden in Santiago

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- The Puerto Rico Missionary Team as they continue to serve those who lost their possessions and are suffering with anxiety from the earthquakes
- The continued development of my Spanish skills
- The DR and PR Foros that are happening in the next month. *Foro, Spanish for "forum"

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- Other missionaries and friends who are helping me navigate a new place.
- That my Spanish is slowly coming, and I am able to have basic conversations with others.

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many congregations and individuals who pray for, encourage and support me

Adjusting to missionary life looks different for everyone. There are things here that take longer or more time than they did in the United States. Going to the grocery store or doing laundry are some examples of this. Going to the grocery store takes more planning and thought. Without having a car, I need to determine transportation. I

have to use a new currency that looks like monopoly money in my wallet. All the labels are in Spanish, meaning I have to pay extra attention in order to ensure I am getting the things I need. There is no such thing as a quick 5-minute trip to the grocery store. It takes that long or longer just to get to the store. Mundane tasks may take longer and be more difficult here, but it is always an adventure and I am thankful that my missionary friends are making the adjustment easier. I am excited to continue learning and adjusting to a new a place.



Left: Cooking Mangú (a tradition DR Dish. Similar to mash potatoes made with plantains)

Right: Grocery Shopping - Posing in front of an air-couch

No tengas miedo, que yo estoy contigo; no te desanimes, que yo soy tu Dios. Yo soy quien te da fuerzas, y siempre te ayudaré; siempre te sostendré con mi justiciera mano derecha. Isaías 41:10 (RVC)

Blessings in Christ

-Ashley Lehr

Join my Facebook where I share more frequent updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SendAshley/>



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