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Faro a Colon or Columbus Lighthouse in Santo Domingo.

CULTURE CORNER

Christopher Columbus (Cristobal Colon in Spanish) came to the Dominican Republic in 1492. He brought many things from Europe with him, but the most important is Christianity. I never thought of Columbus as a missionary until moving here.

This lighthouse (faro) sits in Santo Domingo. It is a monument, dedicated in 1992, 500 years after Columbus first stepped foot on the island. The building is in the shape of a cross and has a cross shaped beam that is illuminated each year on Columbus Day. It can be seen all the way in Puerto Rico. Columbus' remains are in the center of the lighthouse. Artifacts from throughout the Americas sit in museum inside the lighthouse.

Engraved on the walls behind me is a prayer by Pope John Paul II.



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The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. Psalm 145:15-18



The sky changes over 48 hours during the Sahara dust phenomenon in Santiago. Photo credit: Lilian Fritzier

Seasons are ways we measure time. Most of the time, we relate the change of seasons to weather. There are different types of seasons too, and we can read about those in Ecclesiastes 3. The beauty of seasons is that they are temporary. Right now, we are in a season of pandemic, changing how we interact and gather with people. We are also in hurricane season here in the Caribbean (June 1-November 30). We go through different seasons in life that bring joy and sorrow, blessings, and difficult times. One thing that remains steadfast during all seasons is God. He is faithful in providing for us. He is faithful to be near to all who call on him.

Weather Update: You have probably heard about the Sahara Dust phenomenon. This is a regular occurrence here in the Caribbean, but this year it has been more noticeable than in past years. We had an entire day where we could not see the sun or any clouds. Everything had a yellow tinge to it.

I am working with Deaconesses Danelle Putnam and Caitlin Ramirez to help create a hurricane preparedness plan the Dominican deaconesses can implement in the congregations. Back in November, Alliance Missionary Pastor to Puerto Rico, Gustavo Maita, gave a workshop here in the DR through our mercy center about disaster response. With these great resources, we will be ready to respond if a hurricane comes!

Here in the Dominican, we are typically always in water saving mode. Yes, even on an island we can experience drought. We have not received a lot of rain during the past few months, but thankfully a few unexpected storms rolled through last week. The rain also brings cooler temperatures in the early evening.

FUN AT WORK!

Deaconess Caitlin Ramirez is part of a team that has been working to find new ways to connect with support networks when travel is not possible. She put together and filmed a Mission Moments for Kids program to help the youngest supporters learn more about life on the mission field. One of the activities was a puppet show to tell about Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8. It was fun to be part of the puppet show filming!

Virtual Bible Study with the youth in Las Americas has taken off this month with limited internet interruptions! It is still a learning process to teach in Spanish and to teach on Zoom, but *poco a poco* (little by little) we continue to meet and strengthen our community. The core group of girls has been such an encouragement for me, from welcoming me back in December when I first showed up at the congregation (and continuing to be welcoming) to encouraging me to give online classes a try and being patient through it all. Their participation and discussion alone are great supports.

The DR is allowing one in-person worship service each week. All other activities are postponed or held virtually. Since Bible Study is now online, the rest of the youth from our congregations in the Dominican Republic are invited to join us. I look forward to welcoming and getting to know these other youth from Santiago as well as introducing the youth from Santo Domingo to other young Christians.

I am able to go over the Bible Studies with my Spanish teacher, Sandra, each week before I teach. This is all because the Latin America and Caribbean Region has set up Centro de Idiomas y Cultura (Language and Culture Center). All my Spanish classes are tailored to what I need to learn to live and share the Gospel in the Dominican Republic. Sandra did not grow up going to church regularly. Through our class activities, such as reading devotions or correcting the Spanish in my Bible Study prep, we talk about Jesus in every class! Last week, she asked if her 16-year-old son could join our Bible Study!



One of the first Zoom Youth Bible Studies.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers, support, and encouragement. I genuinely appreciate all the prayers and messages you send me. The Lord continues to provide so that I can stay here in the Dominican Republic throughout my internship to continue to learn more about the Church throughout the world and strengthen my skills as a deaconess. Thank you for being part of the journey with me.

*Joyfully Serving in Christ, Kate Phillips
Deaconess Intern*



Behind the scenes of puppet show filming with Missionaries Erin Mackenzie and Jeancarlos Ramirez.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Virtual youth group that we can continue to meet, study God's Word, and grow in faith
- My Spanish teacher Sandra and her family
- The change in government after July 5 elections that it may continue to go peacefully

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- God's providing hand during this time of pandemic
- The people who continue to support and encourage me, both on the field in my internship and with prayers and financial support

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."

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