



URUGUAY HAS A NEW PRESIDENT

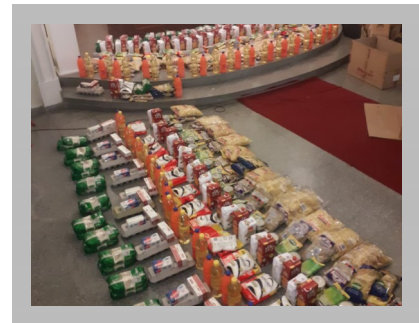


Uruguay holds presidential elections every five years and the president is constitutionally prohibited from serving consecutive terms. We knew we would have a new president, but most people assumed it would be from the coalition of leftist parties called the Frente Amplio (Broad Front), who have held the presidency for the last fifteen years. A combination of factors led to the election of Luis Lacalle Pou, the candidate of the conservative National Party, as the head of a coalition of conservative groups. Here, the previous president, Tabaré Vázquez, applauds President Lacalle, son of former president Luis Alberto Lacalle de Herrera. We pray for good government that allows us to preach the Gospel in peace.



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Mission Continues During the Coronavirus Pandemic



Left, getting ready for the livestream of the Sunday morning service; right, food is laid out in a very organized way so that we can assemble the food baskets we have been distributing throughout the economic crisis caused by Coronavirus. Below, my first “practice” Bible study over Zoom and on Facebook Live.

We arrived back in Uruguay after Home Service (see page 4) in February, just as Coronavirus was starting to be daily news. When we arrived at the airport, there were even a few people on some of the other flights that arrived at the same time who were wearing masks. At the time, there were no confirmed cases of the virus in Uruguay. As the news of the global spread of the virus continued, especially as Italy and Spain became epicenters, we knew that it was only a matter of time before the virus arrived in Uruguay.

On March 13th, the government announced the first positive cases. They reacted immediately with a series of measures, including closing schools for at least two weeks, some border controls, restriction of internal travel, plus a voluntary quarantine/stay at home order. They also closed government offices. Between schools, the government, and restaurants, there wasn't much movement in the streets of Montevideo.

We met as pastors as soon as the announcement to close schools was made. Because our main ministry is so connected to the school, it seemed like the right thing to do to suspend services. The first week we tried to send the service out over Facebook Live just

from a cellphone camera—it didn't work very well, unfortunately. The Wi-Fi signal in the church wasn't very good and so we had a lot of stops and freezes and stuff. We decided the next week to record the service and transmit it Sunday morning. That was a little easier on us, but we didn't like it. We eventually got help and having gotten a little better at it every week, started doing it live again, with much better (still not



perfect!) results. Initially we saw a spike in participation, including many people who had never attended church in person, but like many other churches, we have seen viewership drop off. There is no substitute for the people of God gathered around Word and Sacrament.

We also, of course, began doing church meetings, Bible studies, and other activities like youth group on-line. It was a (continued)

Coronavirus can't stop us from preaching the Gospel and showing Christian Mercy



Callie and our vicar, Kauê Paniz, participate in Confirmation class via Zoom. They had only had one meeting in person before quarantine.

(continued from page 1)

bleasing to have already been so familiar with tools like Zoom because we use them every week for our meetings with other missionaries in the region and people back in the States. It's always good to see how God has prepared you for a crisis in ways you didn't even expect.

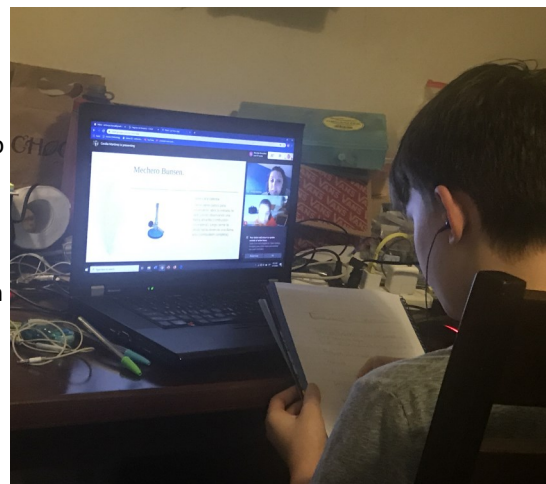
RESPONDING TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Since the government took such quick action, the health crisis hasn't been as bad as it is in many other countries (including Uruguay's neighbors, Brazil and Argentina). But that quick action has had economic effects and many people are suffering. Many restaurants and other small businesses in Uruguay operate on very tight margins and simply have not made it through the crisis. We also have a lot of people who work in the "informal economy" - day work, chores, whatever they can—which has been hit hard. The church has responded and we are distributing food and other important items to people throughout Montevideo, both members and non-members. Some of the people we are helping are through contacts made in a local public school by Lutheran Hour Ministries and the children's outreach headed up by Angie. Praise God!

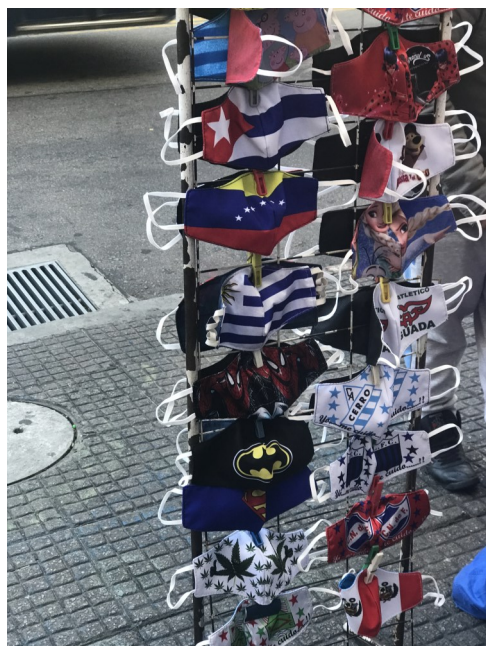
THE FAMILY ADAPTS TO QUARANTINE LIFE

The kids have all been doing fine with online school. It is interesting to see how their teachers have been creative to do lessons via the various platforms they have chosen. My favorite is Ambrose is learning a dance to music from The Nutcracker for his gym class. It is fun to watch! The government recently reopened the rural schools (where the virus didn't really reach) and has announced that the metropolitan schools can reopen at the end of the month.

Because we are all in a big social unit, the family has been going to church with me for the last few weeks. They were able to play in our yard area behind our house but hadn't otherwise left our house except for church since March 13th. They missed their friends and classmates and were pretty excited that they were able to go back to school (modified with various measures of social distancing) in July. They had only been back to school for two weeks in March when the quarantine started. We still don't know how the school year will be modified. How the end of the year will go, schools and the government are trying to figure out.



Ambrose attending one of his classes online. The school adjusted to distance learning quickly and pretty smoothly!



Masks for sale on 18 de Julio (the main street in downtown Montevideo) show the Coronavirus crisis in an Uruguay context. Designs include the flag of Uruguay, soccer and basketball teams, flags from Cuba, Peru, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic (who have many people living and working in Uruguay), and symbols of marihuana, legal and widespread in Uruguay.

ES TIEMPO DE SER SOLIDARIO.

Estamos entregando canastas de alimentos a familias de la escuela Croacia No 275 de Millán y Las Violetas, escuela "Carlos Vaz Ferreira" N° 105 de Millán y L. A. de Herrera y a familias necesitadas de varios barrios de la capital.

TE INVITAMOS A COLABORAR

REDPAGOS N° 72457 y Cuenta ABITAB N° 109426

Por alimentos no perecederos comunicate con nosotros, Acción Social Iglesia Luterana San Pablo

Iglesia Luterana del Uruguay 094368876 094388058 099101986

Armedos porque El Dios amó primero.

The church has been collecting for Coronavirus relief not only from members but from school parents, friends, and other contacts. It is a great way to connect with Uruguayans who distrust the church but are motivated to help.

School News

New Building Opens

The first phase of renovation and new construction on the new property acquired by the school foundation finished just in time for school to open in March. Unfortunately, Coronavirus hit the following week and so the high school kids were only able to have five days of class in the new facility.

It looks outstanding. It is big and shiny and open and modern, with lots of sun and glass. Every classroom is wired for interactive learning and the Wi-Fi is excellent. It is also on a very busy street, an old factory that had sat empty and become an eyesore for many years



and now literally shines in the darkness as traffic flows by. People in the neighborhood were talking and the name and reputation of Colegio San Pablo—and

the Lutheran Church of Uruguay—have grown in the eyes of many neighbors. It is a great blessing and we give thanks to God for the hard work of headmaster, Rev. Mauro Roll, and the administration of the school, and for all



the work done by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund to get the loan done that made it possible. This new location will allow the school to continue to grow as well as make the next phase of construction at one of the other campuses safer for workers and students.

Castillo Renovations

At the same time workers were busting their tails to get the newest building ready for students, others were working on the oldest building the school owns. The Castillo Soneira, an historic building next to the Uruguayan president's official residence, has been owned by the school for over 10 years and has

been painstakingly renovated through this whole process. It is a building on the national historic register, so you can't just slap some aluminum siding on it and call it done. Many of the bricks, tiles, etc. have to be done by hand, one at a time. This process is nearing completion and the Castillo is looking beautiful. When the renovations are complete and things begin to return to normal after the pandemic, construction is scheduled to begin on new buildings on the Castillo property that will be the seat of a Lutheran university in Uruguay—opening up new connections and new ways of both training people for service and connecting with people with the Gospel.



While we were on home service, Angie and I both had the opportunity to be part of the region's response to the earthquakes near Ponce, Puerto Rico. We arrived just a couple of days after the first major quake, and worked to support the Puerto Rico team in any way we could: caring for the team, checking up on members, buying and distributing supplies. By God's providence, there was already an LCMS mission team with a mercy center and supplies in Ponce, so LCMS pastors were some of the first people to respond to both the physical and spiritual needs of people affected by the earthquakes. Here I am praying along with Pastor James Neuendorf, who serves in Ponce along with his wife Den. Christel, at a temporary shelter at a school. The team has done a great job responding to this disaster with love, care, and God's grace, and we were honored to be there to help.

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!

Home Service *or How We Spent Our “Summer” “Vacation”*

HOME SERVICE



A presentation after church at Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Wood River, Illinois. Saint Paul was my fieldwork church in seminary.

About every two years, all of our LCMS missionaries return to the USA for Home Service, where we reconnect with supporters and refresh a little bit. We visit family, do a little shopping (okay, a **lot** of shopping—clothes, clothes, clothes), and try to get some time in to relax.

SUMMER VACATION WITH SNOW

The previous time we came back for home service, it was during the summer in the USA. However, because the kids are older now, they can't miss school like that, so we had to come back during their summer vacation. That is winter in the USA. So their summer vacation had plenty of snow and cold—but they liked it! I was worried that the wintertime would mean that we would miss a lot of our presentations or there would be poor attendance because of the winter weather. But we only had one event cancelled because of weather, and the attendance at all of our presentations was great. We love to meet supporters and answer questions. We wish we could visit everyone, but there just isn't enough time. This time we spent mostly in the Midwest; we are hoping to head to the East Coast when we come back for Home Service again.

ST LOUIS RECONNECT

An important part of every Home Service is heading to St. Louis to meet with the staff of the departments that support our work. We can't do our work in Uruguay without a bunch of great people who help us, and meeting face to face is very helpful as they share things that have changed and check up on us. We have meetings with our supervisors and help to plan our vision for the next couple of years of work.



I was going to photoshop out the kid who wasn't paying attention to Angie's presentation at St. Peter's Lutheran School in Fort Wayne, Indiana, but he seems so excited to be in the picture.



We saw plenty of snow in our travels in the Midwest, even in "Montevideo" - when we stopped in Montevideo, **Minnesota** to take a picture with the statue of the founder of Uruguay, José Artigas.



Something you wouldn't see in Uruguay—youth at Zion Lutheran Church in Manning, Iowa, serving up milk as one of the beverages for the after-service meal. They don't drink a lot of milk in Uruguay, but we do in Iowa.

Mission Updates

City Mission

The City Mission has been most impacted by Coronavirus as it is a very small space and we can't really do anything according to the protocols established by the government. We have used it as a center for distributing food and other aid, but since so much of the people that participate are at-risk populations, there's not much that we could do ministry-wise. As we have been saying for a long time, we need a bigger space, and we decided to take advantage of this time to close that location and look for another one. We are narrowing in on some possibilities and should be moved in to a new spot soon. Meanwhile, we are doing on-line Bible studies and Angie has expanded her English classes to include online students.

Chapicuy (Northern Uruguay)

We have begun having services again post-COVID in Chapicuy (although they were getting weekly "services" through our Internet broadcasts during the pandemic). We are happy with the growth we have seen and with the contacts and members we already have in the nearby major cities of Salto and Paysandú. We believe it is time to put a full-time mission developer in the area. We will be presenting a plan to our

Mission Foro (virtually) in October and hope to have a call for a pastor from a partner church in November. Please pray for this growing ministry and that the Lord would guide us in both the planning/strategy for a northern mission parish and in the process of calling a man to this important ministry.



Prado

Prado has been really strange during the Coronavirus quarantine because it has been the focus of a lot of what we do—our worship services were being transmitted from there, as well as the main center for the relief supplies distribution—but it has also been very different due to the absence of classes taking place at the adjacent school. As things slowly return to normal, pray that the ministry of the congregation

continues to grow and reach neighbors and school families with the hope of the Gospel.

New Missions (Montevideo East)

Last time I told you about a concentration of people in the far east of Montevideo. Coronavirus has done a number on our plans for those new groups, but we have also been able to have them participate in the online worship services, which we did not offer before the quarantine.

We are almost ready to start doing things in person again; it will start with a couple of Bible studies in two different neighborhoods/suburbs. We will spend time visiting and getting to know the areas, too. We would like to be able to find a place to offer English classes and other outreach activities.

The team is hoping that if we can get a full-time mission developer/church planter for the northern Uruguayan missions centered around Chapicuy, we will be able to spend more time on the groups to the east of Montevideo, making that the next target for growth into a congregation and, Lord willing, another full-time mission developer.



Just a couple of weeks after we returned to Uruguay, my dad, Tom, took a turn for the worse. We didn't know what to do—Coronavirus was already hitting the USA and was only a matter of time before it made it to Uruguay, too. I tried to get on the one flight that night between the Uruguay and the USA, but it was full. My dad died early the next morning. My dad was a very important part of my life and a lot of who I am is just a pale imitation of him. At the end of his life, he finally asked to be baptized. We take comfort in the promises that God gives us through Baptism, and that because my dad was buried with Christ in Baptism, he will also be raised with Christ on the Last Day. Please pray for my mom, Linda, who has lost her husband of over 50 years, and give thanks for my brother and sister-in-law, Matt & Regina, who have been such great helpers to my parents during my dad's long illness.

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Sharp *Family* News

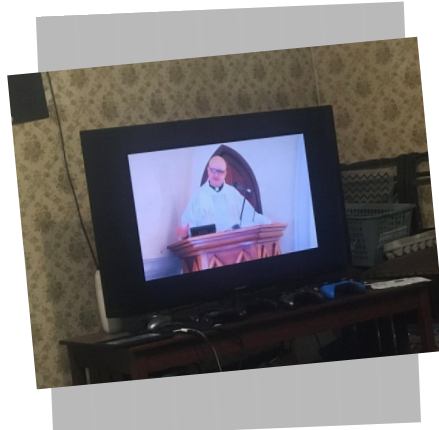


Vicar Kauê plays the accordion!

PLEASE PRAY FOR US:

- Thank God for the means he has given to us to carry on ministry during the pandemic.
- Pray for safety and wisdom for our son, Elias, who is beginning high school.
- Ask God to bless our search for a new pastor to develop the northern mission.
- Pray that the right location opens up for our downtown mission.
- Thank God for peace and democracy in Uruguay and the peaceful elections and transfer of power, not a given in Latin America.
- Pray God's peace for our family who are still mourning the loss of my dad, Tom.

WITNESS ALWAYS



The family got used to watching dad "on TV" - we are glad to be back to worship in person.

NEW HOUSE

Not the *best* time to move during a pandemic, but we were able to move into a new house in downtown Montevideo, close to the downtown mission. It is a little smaller but still has plenty of room for all of us, and is in a downtown neighborhood with plenty of places to shop and eat around. It is quite a bit farther from school, which makes the current part-time school schedule kind of a pain, but we are making it! It is also saving us a lot of money on both rent and utilities, and doesn't have condo fees (which are very common in Uruguay) like the other place. It has been a great blessing already and we look forward to the extra work we can put in

being closer to the downtown mission. And we live above a bakery!

KID NEWS

Elias is headed to St. Paul's Lutheran High School in Concordia, Missouri, for high school. We put a lot of thought and prayer into it and of all the options, Elias and we thought that this was the best option for him going forward, since he really wants to return to the USA for college. He has another missionary kid friend who will be joining him, and he's excited to try out for soccer and maybe take up organ. **Ambrose** moved up from confirmation club to the "big kids" youth group and is already one of their most vocal leaders and most faithful participants. They were able to have their first in-person meeting this past week. **Callie** and **Maggie** are busy with school and doing great, and have started to be big helpers for mom and dad in the kitchen (Callie especially likes to do "prep work" for dad while I'm cooking). All the kids miss their friends from our apartment complex in Prado but really like our new house—and like being able to walk out to the Rambla, the path along the river where Montevideans like to ride bikes, jog, and drink mate. We are getting used to living the real "urban" life again.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

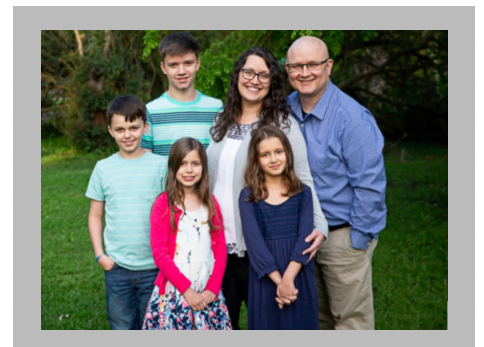
I'm going to do a better job. Going to get one out every month. Please harass me if I don't. We have a lot going on and we want to tell you about it.

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."