

# SERVING THE LORD IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

## MISSIONARY COURTNEY ZALMANOFF



Enjoying my last weeks in the Dominican Republic by visiting new places and enjoying God's creation on this beautiful island. This is a special place!



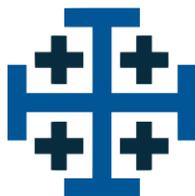
Spending time in fellowship around the bonfire during the short-term team visit to Puerto Rico.

*Shalom,* dear friends in Jesus! In

Hebrew, “shalom” means peace: a state of tranquility, quiet or harmony. I think of the perfect calm morning, sitting on a balcony with a steaming cup of coffee and my Bible, overlooking a mountain ridge as the fog lifts and the sun rises. Sounds pretty peaceful to me!

When I reflect on the past two and a half years during my time as a missionary, “peaceful” is not a word that immediately comes to mind. In the midst of living and working in an unfamiliar culture, learning to navigate adulthood overseas, dealing with shifting responsibilities and a global illness, the world seems anything but peaceful. Sometimes God feels far away, and the isolation feels too heavy to bear. Situations arise in which we feel unequipped to navigate, yet there is no way to avoid them. The fruit of our labors can seem imperceptible and intangible. Life as a missionary is overwhelming and finding peace in the circumstances in which we find ourselves can be challenging. Yet our own earthly preoccupations are not the end of the story.

Jesus tells us in John 14:27 that He gives us peace, yet Paul says in Philippians 4:7 that this peace transcends all human understanding. Jesus is the source of the peace we receive on earth, yet our mortal minds are unable to comprehend what this even means. When chronic illness feels debilitating, when I can't remember the Spanish word for something I need, when events are cancelled last minute and all the hard work was for naught, or when I miss family and friends who live far away, I remember the peace that Jesus gives is not meant for us to understand completely. We put our trust in the Lord and in His promises, and in return we receive the love, grace, mercy, and peace



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](http://lcms.org/service).

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Courtney in Latin America

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that comes from above. Jesus, and the peace He gives, is the greatest and only comfort we need.

A friend pointed me to this verse recently and reminded me that God does not overlook the work He does through us for His Kingdom. Hebrews 6:10 states, “God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them”. Since my time as a missionary began, together we have supported the sharing of the Gospel through 5 short-term teams, visits to mission sites in three countries, many FORO gatherings, an alliance missionary orientation for the first Brazilian cohort of missionaries, one LAC missionary conference, the creation of the Missions Unpacked and Missions Unpacked for Kids programs, collaboration on countless cross-regional projects, teaching English to Lutheran schoolteachers, and so much more. God has taught me that He can and will work through any situation to share His saving grace and the love of His Son Jesus however chaotic it may seem. For this, I “sing and make music from [my] heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:19-20).

Dear brothers and sisters, I sincerely thank you for all your support the past two and a half years. As my missionary service comes to a close, I am reminded of how special it is to be a part of the Body of Christ. Thank you for your encouragement, prayers, kind messages, financial support, hugs and the friendship we share in Christ. Your engagement in this ministry made it possible for God to accomplish so many things and share His love with so many people. While I do not know what He has planned for me next, I look

forward to continuing to serve Him together in all that we do, with our eyes ever fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2). What peace it is to know Jesus and to know His love poured out for us on the cross. I pray we may all share in that peace that Jesus gives, loving our neighbors and glorifying God in all that we do.

I will leave you with this message of peace from God, the Creator of all things; from Jesus, the Savior of the world; and from the Holy Spirit, the Sustainer of faith: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you [*shalom*]” (Numbers 6:24-26).

שָׁלוֹם

### Verse of the month!

“Porque yo sé los pensamientos que tengo acerca de vosotros, dice Jehová, pensamientos de paz, y no de mal, para daros el fin que esperáis.”  
Jeremías (Jeremiah) 29:11

### Prayer Requests

- For my transition back to the United States.
- Thanksgiving for two and a half years of missionary service in Latin America & the Caribbean.
- Thanksgiving for all the things God has taught me during my time as a missionary.
- Thanksgiving for all my faithful supporters.
- Thanksgiving for a smooth short-term team last month in Puerto Rico.
- For all missionaries around the globe.

To support the LCMS through another missionary, you may give a tax-deductible gift:

Online at lcms.org/missionary support	By calling a donor care representative at 1-888-843-5267	LCMS P.O. Box 66861 St. Louis, MO 63166-6861	Mission Central 40718 Highway E16 Mapleton, IA 51034
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Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod with the missionary’s name on the memo line.

