

The Fritsche Family

Serving the Lord in the Dominican Republic



Baptisms, Confirmations & More

On Sunday, December 19 at Pueblo Nuevo we celebrated a baptism, a confirmation and a reaffirmation of faith.

Warm Christmas greetings from the Dominican Republic! We pray that you had a blessed Christmas and are ready to ring in the New Year. Our family is currently enjoying three days of rest at an AirBnB after a busy couple of months leading up to the Christmas holidays. Max is with us from his boarding school in Missouri for a couple more days before he returns.

Just before Christmas, we were able to celebrate the fruits of continued evangelistic work in Pueblo Nuevo as well as new evangelistic efforts in a nearby community called Cien Fuegos. We have been wanting to start work in Cien Fuegos for some time now and the Lord just so happened to open up some doors for us within the last three months for regular activity there.

First of all, let me talk about the confirmation we celebrated. We've mentioned before our work in a small community on the edge of Pueblo



**The DR
Coat of Arms**
God, Country
and Freedom

Please pray for...
New Pueblo Nuevo
member Victor Reyes
and his family.

New mission
opportunities in
Cienfuegos (Santiago)

The David Preus
family, relocating to
serve in Romania.

Praise God for...
The confirmation of
Estervina and Baptism
of Valeria

Healing for Rosi,
member of Pueblo
Nuevo





Pastor Fritsche, Estervina and Seminararian Carlos Ventura

Nuevo called El Congo. Mercedes, one of our Pueblo Nuevo members (and also Principal of our two Lutheran schools), continues to connect us with people who live in that community. For a couple of years now we have had regular visits, Bible studies and catechism classes with folks there. Half of the 25-30 kids at our Saturday Bible school (Deaconess Clarion will tell you more about this!) Come from that area. The latest fruit of our work there was the confirmation of Estervina, a dear lady who began catechesis before the pandemic, but finally finished just before Christmas. The Thursday before her confirmation, several of us gathered at Mercedes' house for one final session of catechism, along with empanadas and sweet bread. This is just one more example of how we work with our members to do outreach in the community around the mission. Third year seminarian Carlos (Venezuela) was instrumental in getting Estervina catechized and confirmed. Estervina is very active in the church and will be a blessing to our church and our continued outreach efforts in El Congo. I thank God for our seminarians who do so much excellent evangelistic work!

This academic year, fourth year seminarian Rafael Flores is serving Pueblo Nuevo, with a special emphasis on establishing the new site in Cien Fuegos. Rafael is from Venezuela, but immigrated to Chile a few years ago. Rafael is married to missionary Jamielynn Tinkey. Recently Rafael and Pastor Ted Krey reconnected with a Venezuelan who they knew back when Rafael was a boy and Pastor Krey was a missionary in Venezuela. Victor Reyes had been confirmed years before in the Lutheran Church in Venezuela, but had not been active since moving to the Dominican several years ago with his family. Upon reconnecting with Rafael and Pastor Krey, Victor took a few refresher sessions of catechism and was received at Pueblo Nuevo by reaffirmation of faith. His young daughter Valeria was also baptized that same Sunday. And guess what? Victor works as a coach for youth at a school in Cien Fuegos and has invited our team to weekly volleyball practice with 60 youth where we have opportunity to share the Gospel. Sem. Rafael and Sem. Josué Ventura (both Venezuelans) go once a week and our whole Pueblo Nuevo team joins them once a month for support. It's amazing how the Lord brings people together and opens doors for new opportunities to bring the Gospel to new people. This is another great example of how our seminarians are being formed as evangelists to plant new Lutheran churches where they will serve.



Pastor Krey leading a devotion with 60 youth in Cien Fuegos, Santiago, DR

Deaconess Happenings

Celebrating Christmas Deaconess style!



Deaconesses Clarion leads the Sunday school children in a song for our Christmas service.

Christmas is one of my favorite times of year and it has been even more meaningful as I celebrated my first Christmas as a deaconess.

Christmas begins early here with lights going up in October! There is decorating of the church to plan, Sunday school lessons and songs to work on, Seminary wives gift exchange and tree decorating, a women's Christmas bible study and party at the church, and the Christmas meal at church to organize.

In October we restarted our in person Saturday Bible school. It has been so much fun to decorate the tree with the children and work with them on the Christmas story and the singing of O Come Little Children in Spanish. This growth is the result of great effort by the deaconess students to walk the neighborhood greeting families and telling them about our Bible school. We even have four or five children who come to church on their own who are interested in catechesis.

The women of the congregation are a great blessing and critical to the work of the Bible school. Recently, the women had a wonderful time studying the life of Mary and her example of faith and obedience. We sang the Magnificat, decorated ornaments, and shared great food at our Christmas celebration. I am excited to begin a monthly women's bible study and craft time!



A wonderful group of ladies sitting in front of the fire at our woman's Christmas bible study.

The seminary wives are another great blessing. It was very special to plan the decorating of the seminary for Christmas with them. We participated in chapel, decorated the seminary, shared good food, and had a gift exchange. There was much joy and laughter! I look forward to our continued studies together!



Christmas decorating at Concordia Seminary

Seminary Updates



Seminarians, missionaries and Palmar Arriba church members enjoy a game of volleyball

On December 18 we wrapped up the first semester of classes of our fifth academic year. Once again I taught Hebrew I. I had only two students this year for the class, as most of the students took Hebrew two years ago. We usually get off to a slow start as this is the first time students have worked with another language, especially one as different as Hebrew. They also have to get a handle of the grammar of their own language. In addition to Hebrew, I taught Hebrew Readings, which all students take. It is a weekly study of the Old Testament reading two Sundays ahead. This helps them keep up their Hebrew and get preaching ideas.

At our opening service we dedicated our new multi use basketball/volleyball and soccer court. By the end of the semester it has seen a lot of action. It has provided a great area for student activities and for them to mix with missionaries and members of the community for extra curricular activities.

In late November I travelled to Mexico City for three different meetings. First I attended part of

the pastoral assembly of the Lutheran Synod of Mexico to present a document, a memorandum of understanding on how our seminary collaborates with church bodies in theological education. It helps each church to have a formal *rite vocatus*, that is a formal process for forming, examining, calling and ordaining candidates for pastoral ministry. They unanimously approved the document to be signed at the next FORO, which took place several days later. We are working on this with each of our partner churches.

I also attended the regional International Lutheran Council meeting, where 13 Latin American Lutheran Church bodies were represented. I gave a presentation on the seminary and its programs. Most importantly, this gave me some face to face time with church presidents to talk about the seminary and foster relationships. I was also able to finally deliver diplomas to two of our recent graduates. What a joy to see them actively, faithfully serving the Church, proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus! Your support of me as a missionary and of our seminary help make this possible all around Latin America. THANK YOU!



Pastor Fritsche with President Garcia of Mexico and new Pastors Guillermo Leyva and Nefta Garcia

Family Updates

Feliz Navidad y Prospero Año Nuevo from the Fritsches! We hope this season finds you filled with the joy of our Savior. Our family has certainly enjoyed the time we have had together to celebrate. There have been many gatherings and special services to make our Christmas merry and bright. Of course, the celebration can't end without the seminary New Year's Eve party at Casa Fritsche! It is always a fun way to ring in the New Year.

Things continue to move quickly for us. Viktor is now into his second trimester of his senior year with Wittenberg Academy and really has enjoyed having Max home and time with

missionary friends. Max continues to do well and enjoy his time at St. Pauls and has had a blast here in the D.R. during Christmas break. Andrei is doing well with his transition to Wittenberg Academy. His first trimester went well and he has had a great start to the second. We are also thankful his growth hormone treatment is helping him get taller and taller.

Thank you to all of you for the steadfast support you offer us! Your partnership in the Gospel is critical to what we do on a daily basis. Thank you for allowing us to be your hands and feet on the mission field in the DR and beyond. Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to you all. Abrazos desde lejos!

Pastor Joel and Deaconess Clarion Fritsche



Our 2021 family Christmas picture



Family Christmas Carol at our missionary Christmas gathering

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To support the LCMS through the work of Pastor Joel & Deaconess Clarion Fritsche, 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
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