

December 2021



INTERNATIONAL *Lemus* MISSION

SPREAD THE GOSPEL. PLANT LUTHERAN CHURCHES. SHOW MERCY.

News from God's mission field in Uruguay from Pastor Philip and Deaconess Rachel Joseph, Career Missionaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



We've been "green lit"!

Shortly before Christmas we received word that we have been "green lit" for deployment and plan to head into this two-step transition in **February 2022**. We will dedicate time in the Dominican Republic (regional headquarters for Latin America and the Caribbean) to intensive language study and regional orientation. After a few months we will then leave for Montevideo, Uruguay. This is exciting news and we are thrilled to share it with all of you who have been and continue to pray for and financially partner with us to make our work possible! THANK YOU to each of you who have been the Lord's instrument to help us make it to this point. We could not do this work without a support system like you, and we're excited to share more specifics soon.

A NEW SEASON

As we prepare for the first stage of our departure to the Dominican Republic and eventually, Uruguay, there are many emotions associated with this exciting time. You might be able to think of some of them: relief, joy, excitement, curiosity, uncertainty. These are part of most





big moves or career shifts. But sometimes sadness, anxiety, or frustration can affect missionaries as they prepare to deploy, even as they affect all Christians throughout seasons of life. We face sadness as we tell our loved ones that we are relocating for the foreseeable future, quite far away, in places where some may never be able to visit us. We deal with frustration when our expectations and those of others may not be clearly communicated. We work through anxieties about the moving process, the timeline, and what to pack, among others, and take them to the Lord in prayer. We rely on our team of colleagues on the field, and our supporters (like you!) in the United States who are our colleagues in mission and in prayer.

Preparing to move to establish a new home and begin integration in our target culture and country are exciting but tinged with difficulties this side of heaven. Missionaries are sinful people, not superheroes, and going with the Gospel across linguistic, geographic, and cultural borders is an impossible endeavor for us. But not for God.

God has given us His Word, given us His promises fulfilled in His Son, and called us to this work. He is always faithful, even when we struggle. Thank you for your faithful prayers for us as we prepare to follow the Lord into something new! We're blessed to have you as companions on this journey.

A CHALLENGE FOR YOU

Being "green-lit" means that God's people have been so generous as to help us reach at least 75% of our total funding goal for the first 2 years of service. This does not mean that we're not looking for more partners, though!

If you have not already adopted a missionary or missionary family for 2022 through long-term committed support, we encourage you to prayerfully consider this opportunity and join us. As a family, we are excited to support two other missionary families on a monthly basis, and we are grateful for a few fellow missionaries who have done the same for us. Becoming a Mission Sender is a great way to



stay connected in a personal way with specific missionaries and their work! We currently are blessed with 19 recurring donors through the Mission Senders program and before deploying in February we would love to double this team. Whether you are able to commit \$5, \$10, \$50, or another amount each month, this type of giving will help sustain our work into the future. Please prayerfully consider this, and contact Michelle Beckmann at 800-248-1930, ext. 1047 or michelle.beckmann@lcms.org to learn more.

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

During the last days of 2021, we were blessed to spend time with God's people in three different states! St. James Lutheran in Baltimore, Maryland, Hope Lutheran in Aurora, Ohio, and Zion Lutheran Church and School in Decatur, Indiana received us with wonderful hospitality and enthusiasm. It was a joy to visit a second Baltimore church with a heart for the city and connect some first-time mission supporters to the work in Latin America. We are excited to have each of you journeying with us to Uruguay through your involvement!

So many of you have had wonderful questions and comments and we have enjoyed the engaging conversations about the mission of God's Church during presentations, around dinner tables, and in church narthexes. It was a special privilege to visit the school children at Zion Decatur because this is the school Rachel attended as a child, and where she first considered pursuing missionary service. We had a great morning encouraging some of our church's youngest members to think of themselves as missionaries in their families and communities. It was also fun to challenge them to learn about Uruguay and ponder the world outside their scope of experience. Zion School has generously decided to dedicate some of their chapel offerings to support our work as well! Thank you!

Right before Christmas, Phil preached at Zion Decatur, where we were married 5 years ago and where Rachel was commissioned as a deaconess in 2014. It is humbling to reflect on the ways in which the Lord has brought many pieces of our lives full-circle and we are thankful for His many mercies. We continue to praise God for all of you wonderful mission partners, whether you've been praying for and supporting us since our first deployments 9 and 7 years ago, or whether we met in the last month. It is the Lord sending us, but He is doing it through YOU, because YOU all comprise His Church.



DID YOU KNOW? TOGETHER IN MISSION

Did you know that YOU, by being a member of an LCMS congregation, have over 100 missionaries serving around the world!?! The word "synod" means "walking together", and we walk together in many ways. Our unity of doctrine and enthusiasm for mission work at home and abroad are two of the ways we live this.

In addition to many congregations that have made generous gifts to help send us to Uruguay, three have paved the way for the long-term sustainability of our work by committing to walk with us through the Together in Mission (TIM) program. Thank you to the saints at Zion Lutheran in Bridgeville, PA; Zion Lutheran in Decatur, IN; and Peace Lutheran in Fort Wayne, IN for your commitment to send us as the Lord's workers into the harvest field.

If your congregation would like to take an active role in walking together with your Synod by making sending missionaries like us, contact Julie Loehring to learn about the TIM program. with us, including congregational engagement ideas, by contacting Julie Loehring at julie.loehring@lcms.org.

PRAYER REQUESTS

For those struggling in various ways because of the pandemic, and that we would be able to travel safely in the coming months.

For our brothers and sisters in Uruguay as they reach the lost.

For our continued language studies, especially Phil's Spanish acquisition (8 hours/week), which continues to go well.

That God would continue raising up financial and prayer partners for the coming years.

Thanksgiving that we could celebrate Christmas with both sets of parents.

CONTACT US! PHILIP.JASEPH@LCMS.ORG RACHEL.JASEPH@LCMS.ORG

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