



A note from LCMS Missionaries, James & Christel Neuendorf

The highlight of our month was almost certainly our joint reformation service between both of our missions. Although it was raining in a torrential downpour, and our outdoor plans needed to be suspended, the Mercy House was packed with people and buzzing with activity. The walls echoed with laughter and kids running around, even as the rain beat down on the zinc roof. Amazing food was shared and enjoyed by all. There were several visitors who had never attended our church before. We sang and sang, old Lutheran chorales and new songs from our brand new Latin American hymnal, everyone joined together for a somewhat ridiculous reformation drama, and the entire event culminated in the highest attended church service in all our years here in Puerto Rico. After receiving our Lord's Body and Blood together with the entire mission on the island, having begun with "A Mighty Fortress," we ended singing the new spanish version of the beloved hymn, "We Praise you and Acknowledge You," which was translated by a friend of ours from Argentina. There was not a dry eye in the sanctuary.

The thing is, we started the day completely discouraged. The amount of rain was significant and after so much preparation, it looked like the event would be a complete disaster.

Standing outside at the grill while completely drenched in rain coats, trying desperately with a broom to keep the puddles from getting more than a foot deep, for a moment the absurd notion that the event would be a failure entered our thoughts. We had put a lot of work into setting up a kind of outdoor festival, and all of it was going to be a complete waste. Of course we knew better, but every missionary knows well what Jonah was thinking when he sat under the shade of his plant outside of Nineveh.

What people needed was to receive Christ together and all His gifts. They needed to hear the forgiveness of their sins, and not only to hear it from the pulpit, but in the voices of their brothers and sisters as they confessed with one voice in the words of the creed and in the songs of the church. They needed what only God could give them, His Word and His Sacraments, and the Body of Christ in each other. These were gifts richly given, by the One from whom all blessings flow!

"Pastor, this was so encouraging and meaningful to me, our hearts leapt within us!" people said to me after the worship service. Which is strange, because the rented bouncy castle (A Mighty Fortress! Get it?) that took me forever to arrange, lay pathetically unused in the mud outside.



In early October we hosted a women's craft day. A very special thank you to Immanuel Lutheran in Seymour, IN for sending us sock pumpkin craft kits! We had quite a few visitors (not all pictured here). Apart from our craft time on Thursday and Friday at CARD we occasionally host these Saturday times for people to gather and have time together in fellowship.

One of our hopes and goals for the mercy house is for members and friends of the church to gather and invite others from the community to come and share together as the body of Christ. These kinds of activities give us those opportunities which have continued to be such a blessing for all!



Over the last several months we have set aside Thursday afternoons as "craft" days in which anyone can come in and make crafts or color at CARD. This October, member, Rosa, who is very passionate about coloring and serving at church, became an official volunteer for Thursday afternoons. It's been such a joy to serve alongside church members in serving their community.

Prayers:

- English Classes - that they continue to be an opportunity for learning and sharing of the Gospel.
- Thanksgiving for a wonderful Reformation Sunday celebration.

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