

The Fritzsche Family

Serving the Lord in the Dominican Republic



The DR Coat of Arms

God, Country
and Freedom

Please pray for...

Our two new
residential seminary
students arriving late

Fourth year
seminarians and their
evangelistic projects,
especially Hector and
Carlos

Our son, Private Viktor
Fritzsche, continuing
his Army training (AIT)
at Fort Sill in
Oklahoma

Praise God for...

The ordination of
Jeancarlos Ramirez in
Lima, Peru on Oct. 23.

The consecration of
nine new
deaconesses in the
DR last month

A new Lutheran pastor in Peru

In the LCMS, normally the summer months of June and July are filled with the ordinations of new pastors who graduated from our two seminaries in May. In Latin America, the ordinations do not always happen so quickly. It is a big process for a student to move back to his home country after four years of seminary in a different country. Many of our students do not have the opportunity to return home during those four years. Also, young partner churches and new mission fields need time to prepare for placing a new pastor and ensuring that he has solid support.

In our last newsletter, I highlighted all of our seminary graduations that took place throughout the Latin America region. This is the follow-up, focusing on the ordination of our newest pastor in Peru, Jeancarlos Ramirez. I was privileged to go to Lima, Peru in late October to preach at his ordination. He is now the second Lutheran pastor in our LCMS mission in Peru. It has always been our seminary's plan to participate in the ordinations of our graduates. However, COVID rendered that very difficult. So, this is the first



Pr. Fritsche preaching at the ordination in Peru

ordination I have been able to attend for one of our graduates outside of the Dominican Republic.

Jeancarlos Ramirez is from Lima, Peru, a city of some 11 million people. A number of years ago he was hired to be the cook at the mercy house of one of our young LCMS missions in Lima. It was there that he first encountered a Lutheran Church with Lutheran missionaries. It was also there that he met his wife. Deaconess Caitlin Ramirez was serving as a missionary deaconess intern in Lima at the mercy house, Castillo Fuerte, which runs a program for children. She and Jeancarlos met, got to know one another, dated, then got married. During the course of all that, the Lord was leading Jeancarlos into the Lutheran Church and on the path to prepare for the pastoral ministry. Our seminary has a rule that a new student must have been a member of the Lutheran Church for two years before enrolling.

By 2018, Jeancarlos and Caitlin were ready to make the move to the Dominican Republic to begin his studies. Deaconess Caitlin served in numerous roles with congregations and the seminary during those four years. The beginning of seminary was an adjustment for Jeancarlos. While he was well-educated and even spoke English, substantive theological study, with Greek and Hebrew, was new to him. On top of beginning his studies in the DR, Caitlin and Jeancarlos had their first baby, Abraham, that first year and two years later, their second, Eliana. Through it all, the Lord made Jeancarlos into a faithful Christian father and a very capable student and evangelist.



Pastor Jeancarlos Ramirez communing his flock

Jeancarlos developed a pastoral heart and became an amazing evangelist and preacher. His teamwork with Caitlin during his final year in the DR has equipped him to work with her as a deaconess at his side, both of them now in a team ministry setting in Lima with a congregation and mercy house. The two have gone full circle, following the Lord's lead all the way.

Seminario Concordia el Reformador (CMSCR) forms men to be pastors, teachers and evangelists. Jeancarlos is well-equipped to plant a church from scratch. He has the theology and the experience of visitation and pastoral care. Please pray for this young family as they serve the Lord in Lima! Thank you for your support for CMSCR. This is truly what it is all about! (More on Page 4)

Deaconess Happenings

Where did the fall go?



Deac. Clarion with new deaconess students

December on “Diaconal Identity.” I praise God for the faithfulness of these women! Please pray for them as they begin their studies!

I continue to lead the group of seminary wives in activities and Bible study. This year we are focusing on the Psalms. So far, we have delved into Psalm 23 and Psalm 25. We enjoy Bible study, food, crafts, prayer, and fellowship. On December 2, we will decorate the Seminary for Christmas and put up the Christmas tree. We are anxiously awaiting our new sister from Mexico to join us, hopefully before Christmas!



Taking the Pueblo Nuevo women to an activity

At Iglesia Luterana de Pueblo Nuevo, there is a lot going on! We continue to have regular Divine Service, Sunday School, and monthly Bible studies for women. There are some new things that we are rather excited about. We have resumed weekly visits to the neighborhood public school in which we share Bible stories and songs (see the story of Hector below). We have had monthly "family night" activities for fellowship and outreach. We have had weekly devotion and coffee time for the women. Our seminarian, Hector Paneque, has organized monthly men's Bible studies as well. These activities are used to "animar" or motivate and encourage our members in their faith. They are also intentionally evangelistic in nature. We encourage our members to invite family and friends to participate. These activities, among others, serve as bridges into the community. The Pastor, deaconesses, and seminary students work together with our local members to make new contacts for sharing Christ.

Where did the fall go? How are we already anticipating Christmas? These are thoughts I have as I look back at the last few months. How blessed they have been!

This year, I am stepping into the role of mentor for the new deaconess students of the Dominican Republic. There are four new students and they all happen to attend Iglesia Luterana de Pueblo Nuevo, our congregation. They have just finished their orientation to the program and are looking forward to their first intensive course in



Deaconess Clarion with sem student wives

Fourth-year seminarians



Vicar Hector and Deaconess Yudaimy at the Pueblo Nuevo public school

This year we have FIVE fourth-year students at Seminario Concordia el Reformador. Our residential pastoral formation program is four years with a vicarage incorporated because of the heavy evangelistic, practical fieldwork experience. The fourth year includes the student's final evangelistic project. Most fourth-year students have two classes per semester, which means that they spend most of their time working in and around our five principal mission congregations. This prepares them to return to their home countries to plant new churches.

Vicar Hector Paneque from Cuba has worked closely with me in Pueblo Nuevo since he began seminary here in 2019. Lord willing, he will graduate in May and return to his home country of Cuba, where we have a small mission congregation of the LCMS. The situation in Cuba is incredibly challenging. People are fleeing the country en masse, including the man who served as Hector's pastor when he began his journey toward pastoral ministry. One ordained pastor remains at the small mission, but Hector will return with far more theological formation and experience. He will be ready to bring the Gospel to people who are struggling in their daily lives and ripe for the Gospel.

Some of our students are in front of new missions for their projects. I have written previously about Carlos' work in Cienfuegos. Hector is doing his project in our established Pueblo Nuevo mission. One of the goals of his project is to reconnect with the local public school. Pre-pandemic we had an active presence once a week at the school, leading the opening prayer for over a hundred students and visiting several classrooms teaching Bible stories, and sharing Jesus. Some of these children end up at our Saturday Bible school. We then have the opportunity to do outreach to their parents and families.

Hector's wife, Yudaimy recently graduated from our deaconess program. Please pray for them and their son, Diego, as they conclude their time here in the DR in May 2023 and return to Cuba to bring Christ to the nations. This will be an incredibly challenging transition for them to return home to Cuba where resources are few. We will continue their story in future newsletters.



Hector at his piano lesson with Mrs. Rebecca Krey

Fritzsche Family Updates

Joel and Clarion have seen the last few months fly as they have been occupied with work, school, family, and various projects. One of Joel's biggest accomplishments was completing his first course for his PhD. He was extremely happy to turn in his final paper! Clarion keeps herself busy with guiding Andrei in his studies, getting some new things going at Pueblo Nuevo, and working with Deaconess students and Seminary wives.



*Sergei decorating
our family
Christmas tree*

Viktor graduated from basic training at Fort Jackson in October. It was a great celebration and a very proud moment. He now has moved on to additional, specific training at Fort Sill in Oklahoma. He loves what he is doing. The whole family will get to spend Christmas with him in Houston and can't wait!

Sergei continues to do well at St. Paul's Lutheran High School in Concordia, MO. He makes his parents proud with his grades and participation in choir and sports. He is visiting the DR for Thanksgiving break and just got his braces off! It is difficult to believe he will be a senior next year.

Andrei continues to thrive and grow. He and Clarion have a lot of fun with his schoolwork and hanging out. He wants everyone to know that he is now taller than his mother! He sees the pediatric endocrinologist in December and we are very happy with his progress.

Pastor Joel and Deaconess Clarion Fritzsche



Private Viktor Fritzsche and his mother the day before graduating from basic training in SC

SUPPORT THE MISSION WORK OF THE FRITSCHÉ FAMILY

To support the LCMS through the work of Pastor Joel & Deaconess Clarion Fritzsche, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Mission Central
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Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Joel and Clarion Fritzsche." Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on our online giving page at lcms.org/fritzsche.

