### **SERVING THE LORD IN**

# **Latin America & the Caribbean:** missionaryMAC





**News from Volunteer Coordinator Erin Mackenzie** | missionaryMAC.blogspot.com | **f** erin.mackenzie5



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I'm down to one container of mango chutney in my freezer (I used my last smoothie-ready baggie-ful earlier this week), but 2023 was a solid season of new mango recipes! I first shared mango recipes in October 2019, but here's five more I've madeand loved—since moving back into my new/old house May 31.

- 1. Chocolate Hazelnut Mango Oatmeal
- 2. Mango Sriracha Hummus
- 3. Mango Coconut Cake
- 4. Creamy Mango Coconut Chicken (with Mango Salsa!)
- Mango Banana Chia Smoothie



Marina and I outside the CPTLN (Lutheran Hour Ministries) office in Panama City, Panama.

# Tzatziki Tales

Over gyros, Marina Gracia gave me the long answer: how she came to be one of 87 women in 9 countries preparing for the office of deaconess. The short answer: God's guiding hand every step of the way.

The story begins in Colombia, where she was born, married, and had her 2 girls. As cartel violence surged and she began to fear for their daily commute to school, Marina & Eduardo applied for Canadian visas in pursuit of a safer place to raise their family. Marina honed her English during the family's time in the Great White North but after three years, couldn't handle the cold. They jumped at an offer from Eduardo's company to be based out of the Panama City branch.

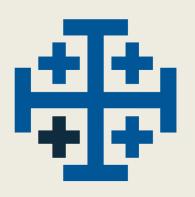
Shortly after the move, Marina found herself alone with her now teenaged daughters, Eduardo away on an extended business trip. It was en route home from a grand adventure to see the country that one of the girls spotted the billboard for "Altos de María." The trio spontaneously pulled off to scope out the housing development in the mountains of Sora...and walked away landowners. At least, they would be the following day when Marina went back with some cash toward a down payment, THEN told Eduardo what she'd done.

For years, Marina looked forward to the fresh air and bubbling brook soundtrack of her rural haven, until her sister urged her to look into a 2nd mortgage for building her dream home. In 2018, Marina and Eduardo ceased to be city dwellers. When a flyer for a fundraising breakfast to support a tutoring program at the nearby Lutheran church caught her eye, the couple went gladly. Marina left with a belly full of pancakes AND a new volunteer position, which led not long after to confirming her newfound faith at Iglesia Luterana Emanuel.

Marina considered and rejected the inaugural deaconess cohort 3 years ago, citing inexperience, but when her husband passed away in December and the next cohort was uncoincidentally delayed until

March...the rest was, as they say, history. Indeed, His story. The diaconal motto is "My desire is to serve"; I'm blessed to be among those with whom Marina has already shared her many gifts, and she still has 2 more years!





## **Praises and Petitions**

- Thanksgiving for Dr. Rick Marrs and his leadership of a <u>Luther Academy</u> continuing education course in Argentina attended by 60+ pastors.
- 2. Thanksgiving that I was able to successfully renew my passport.
- Thanksgiving that my great aunt Penneye is resting comfortably at home after a cancer removal operation.
- 4. For all living in the Haitian/Dominican border region, and for four Haitian seminary students awaiting arrival, as the border remains closed.
- 5. For direction for the Cayman Islands mission, regrouping after plans to purchase a building and open a preschool fell through.

# The Fritzler Era

The climax of the September 2023 DRLM FORO (9/8-10) came near its end, as the Rev. Ted Krey installed the Rev. Sergio Fritzler as the 2nd director in Concordia the Reformer Seminary's history. Heading into the institution's 7th academic year, Fritzler shifts from his role as Provost into the #1 slot far from unprepared, having held the same title at Seminario Concordia de Buenos Aires from 2009-2016. Many more directors will certainly come and go as CMSCR

# Home Service Corner

Currently booking engagements between March 6 and May 4, 2024!

Reach out to see whether I'll be in your area if your congregation, school, campus ministry, Bible study, mission board, Men's Club, or the like would benefit from a missionary presentation—or if you'd just like to chat over lunch or coffee. Consider especially midweek opportunities, as Sundays are at a premium.

prepares men to be shepherds, teachers, and evangelists for generations to come, but what's important isn't who's at the helm. Moments before the rite took place, Rev. Krey parsed the momentous words of 1 Peter 1:25 in his sermon: "...the word of the Lord remains forever" (emphasis added).



Above: Thrifting with a friend from the capital who came to visit—the first overnight guest in my new/old house.



Left: With Miss Willis and Mrs.
White, the <u>Jamaica VBS team</u>'s
contacts at United Early
Childhood Center



Left: Fresh ackee, an ingredient in the Jamaican national dish that's only fit for human consumption after the pods have burst (as shown).

#### **Quote of the Month**

"God writes straight with crooked lines."

-Father Gerard Garrigan, O.S.B., St. Louis Priory School

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