

SERVING THE LORD IN

Latin America & the Caribbean: missionaryMAC



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News from Volunteer Coordinator Erin Mackenzie | missionaryMAC.blogspot.com |  [erin.mackenzie5](https://www.facebook.com/erin.mackenzie5)

(If you received a hard copy of this and would like to help me be green and save on postage, please email erin.mackenzie@lcms.org.)

Current **Guinness World Records**
Held by the Dominican Republic
or Dominicans



1. **Oldest** president: Joaquin Balaguer (89 yrs.), from 1960-62, 1966-78, & 1986-96.
2. **Largest** glass of mojito: 3,519 liters at 4-Jack's Bar and Bistro in Punta Cana on April 17, 2016.
3. **Most** people playing dominoes simultaneously: 3,344, on January 22, 2012.
4. **First** university in the New World: Universidad Santo Tomás de Aquino in Santo Domingo, founded in 1518.
5. **Smallest** living gecko species: Jaragua Dwarf Gecko, 16-18 cm.
6. **Hardest-hit** ball in MLB history: 122.4 mph, by Oneil Cruz on August 24, 2022.

Driving by Faith

Ever since I learned about the massage parlor run by two members of Iglesia Luterana Pueblo Nuevo in Santiago, DR, I'd been wanting to try KNOCKOUT "sometime." "Sometime" became when I was home for FOUR DAYS between 3 1/2 week trips in October and November 2023.



I blocked out time for an afternoon appointment, managed to find the right building AND a parking spot in its tiny lot, and made my way to the 3rd floor. The experience was divine: a dark room, soothing music, and Yinet applying just enough pressure to knead out the tension without causing lingering muscle soreness. Done for the day while her colleague Teresa attended to one more client, Yinet asked if I'd drive her home. Of course, if she either gave me an address to plug into my phone or navigated me. The latter, she said, and proceeded to give me step-by-step directions—a right turn, cutting through a parking lot, a sharp left, a few zig-zags—until we pulled up in front of the black and yellow façade she indicated.

Yinet is blind.

I'm still in awe. Owning a small business (the sign reads...in Spanish...“GIVEN BY BLIND PEOPLE” at the bottom), coming to church every Sunday, and oh yeah, studying to be a deaconess is one thing, but she must recognize every speed bump and pothole by feel. My hands steered only where she guided, trusting wholeheartedly that she knew the way.

I was behind the wheel, but I've never more vividly grasped what it means to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Paul's assertion immediately follows a section contrasting “the tent that is our earthly home” against our “heavenly dwelling.” Christ's sacrifice sealed my eternal destination, yet I wander aimlessly through this vale of tears blinded by sin. Thanks be to God for daily answering my prayer to “Increase [my] faith!” (Luke 17:5) as I step into stride with His gracious leading.

**Making
Disciples
for Life** 



Mission Education Goes Global

I didn't come up with the eye-opening, experiential short-term mission concept known in OIM circles as "mission education," but I've certainly championed it in LAC in 5+ years on the field. I'm overjoyed, therefore, that it's crossed the Atlantic! In May 2023, my Eurasia counterpart Chelsea traveled from her home base in the Czech Republic to Riga, Latvia, to host students from Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne (CTSFW) (whilst another member of the Czech team hosted volunteers from one of his supporting congregations also billed as mission education). With Latvia missionary wife Lindsay Cundiff as her right hand, Chelsea orchestrated a week of understanding what a 100% online seminary education looks like, uncovering the Lutheran church's storied history in the Baltic states, and eating up—literally—Latvian food and culture. The trip was a success for both hosts + visitors: Eurasia is offering a college student mission education trip in March, and I'm dreaming up ways to meet my colleagues' high bar when CTSFW visits the DR this May.



Praises and Petitions

1. Thanksgiving for the ordination of Héctor and the consecration of his wife Yudaimy, both CMSCR graduates, in Cuba on 12/10.
2. Thanksgiving that the Pauls (Cayman Islands) have been granted permission to minister to Cuban refugees.
3. Thanksgiving that the Redeemer (Balboa, Panama) congregation got to worship in their renovated sanctuary for the 1st time on Christmas Eve.
4. For a new kids' English class in Puerto Rico, beginning 1/13.
5. For D, recently released from prison in El Paso, TX, who came to San Pablo Lutheran Church for the first time on Thanksgiving Day.

Left: Look closely—there's a 4-year old (Peru MK Isabela) hiding behind my left arm. *Center:* In mid-December, I helped organize a Zoom between the students at Escuela Luterana la Concordia in Palmar Arriba, DR, and Lutheran schools in WI and IA. *Right:* "Aunt Erin" and nephew Reed (age 7 1/2).



Quote of the Month

"Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about things you cannot change. Prayer is a conversation you have with God about things He can change."

--Sylva Kojakian, Founder, @shejourneyswithhim

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