

SERVING THE LORD IN

Latin America & the Caribbean: missionaryMAC



Home Service 2024

News from Volunteer Coordinator Erin Mackenzie | missionaryMAC.blogspot.com | [f 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.)

The Rev. Ross Johnson, Director of LCMS Disaster Response, joined the LAC regional team for our February 2024 biannual meeting in Panama. His work intersects with our multinational efforts on many levels, from instilling a survival mindset to readying our homes, families, and church communities for fleeing in a flash (3 minutes) to being the immediate boots on the ground in the wake of the unthinkable—and staying for the long haul. Ponder the implications of, and possible reasoning behind, the following, from one of his slides:

Where Natural Disasters Inflict the Most Economic Damage (1995-2015)

1. Americas (\$870 billion)
2. Asia (\$709 billion)
3. Europe (\$262 billion)
4. Oceania (\$40 billion)
5. Africa (\$10 billion)



[source: UNDRR (formerly UNISDR)]



The Crux of the Matter

It's October 2023. I'm walking from the church in La Victoria, Lima, Peru, to the bus stop with a team when a 20-something yr. old team member makes a beeline for a pile of debris across the street. Is she *trying* to get run over by a *mototaxi* or get tetanus? She rejoined the rest of us before I made it to the end of the worst-case scenario rabbit hole with a bundle of green plastic twine in hand, spewing something about crosses. I'd leave for Jamaica later that night; the team would adhere to the plan I'd painstakingly laid out for them in my absence and leave a full day later.



Fast forward a month. I'm back in Lima, and it all becomes clear: the October team member had taken cast-off bundling material and woven it into crosses. I was surrounded by arguably the weightiest of all Christian symbols yet one whose meaning is shrouded to unbelievers.

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Like the unwanted bundle of twine, intersecting beams on a hill outside Jerusalem appear worthless: splinter-ridden firewood. We the faithful, however, know differently. This Lenten season and always, may the tree on which God's only Son "[became] obedient to the point of death" (Philippians 2:8) be a reminder of His "Wondrous Love" (LSB 543) for all mankind.

**Making
Disciples
for Life** 



Praises and Petitions

1. Thanksgiving for the 6th anniversary of Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios's dedication of its current worship space on 2/25.
2. Thanksgiving for the first "Caribbean" Luther Academy continuing education course, held in the DR in early March.
3. Thanksgiving for Mrs. Rebecca Krey and all who stepped up to help the DR FORO, which fell at the beginning of my time in the US, run smoothly.
4. For initial conversations around starting a Cayman Islands FORO.
5. For the families of the 130+ victims of devastating wildfires that raged across Chile in early February.

'Ello, Ellyn

Ellyn Petrovic is next in a string of long-term short-term volunteers helping the region tread water until our newly appointed Regional Business Manager [Stan Stigdon](#) deploys. She'll spend nearly three months in Santiago, primarily handling cash and making DR-related payments. Get to know the woman behind the adding machine with these five fun facts:

1. This isn't Ellyn's first time supporting global business operations; she went to Taiwan to help the Asia region switch accounting systems in 2019.
2. This *also* isn't Ellyn's first time serving in LAC; I've hosted her—and her mom!—twice on congregational teams to Peru.
3. Ellyn cat-sat for me while I was in Panama and Peru in Jan/Feb, but she's a dog mom to D.O.G. ("Diogi") and Manners, one of Diogi's puppies, born in September 2023 (coincidentally, during one of Ellyn's Peru trips).
4. Ellyn currently works as a dialysis nurse, having switched careers after 9 years as an accountant.
5. Ellyn is a beekeeper. Her small-batch honey bears a "Betsy's Bees" label after her grandmother, not because she, too, was a beekeeper—it's an homage to her feistiness!



Left, bottom: An Aaron/Erin sandwich (L to R: Aaron Wade, Feb. 2024 volunteer, DR; me; Erin Alter, Director, LCMS Short-term Mission Teams); *Right:* A Lenten display at my church, Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios in Licey al Medio, DR.

Left, top: Enjoying the reception following the Feb. 4 rededication of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Panama City, Panama with volunteer team member Ernie.

Quote of the Month

"Worry is just a prayer you haven't prayed yet."

—Rev. Will Weedon, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Hamel, IL

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