LWML English District December, 2019

I bring you Advent and Christmas Greetings,

Following Giving Tuesday, which was Tuesday, December 3, 2019, LWML reported on December, 11th. “Thank you for supporting missions which, by the grace of God, will share Jesus’ love at home and around the world! Thanks to everyone who participated in LWML’s 2019 Giving Tuesday challenge. Because of you, approximately $37,719.78 was given for mission work on that one day! This means that LWML, through your generous gifts, met the matching amount of $20,000 made possible by two generous donors. That brought the total donations to $57,719.78 given to support the 2019-2021 LWML Mission Goal. To God be the Glory!”

Shout out to the English District’s Servant to Servant. This emailed weekly newsletter provides information around the District regarding our churches, churches activities and news from our missionaries. Servant to Servant keeps us informed as to what is going on in the District. To subscribe to this free newsletter, please go to [www.englishdistrict.org](http://www.englishdistrict.org).

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

The Apple of His Eye Mission Society – Israel Report from Steve Cohen – “On December 9, 2019 Bob and Kristi Roegner received word that the Israeli Ministry of Interior has approved A3 religious worker’s visas to enter the country and serve as Bible Teachers to Israel! This is a first for the Apple of His Eye (AOHE) and the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. This has been made possible through partnerships with Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel, Immanuel Lutheran Ministries and Immanuel Church-Lutheran in Tel Aviv. Bob and Kristi are scheduled to leave Orlando, the evening of January 9, 2020 and will arrive in Tel Aviv, the early morning of January 11, 2020. A special thanks to all who have joined us in support of this effort, especially the LWML for their kick-starter gift of $100,000!”

Rev. Dr. Jonathan & Deaconess Cheryl Naumann, Latin America - Letter from Pastor Jonathan: Divine Services in our Latin America and Caribbean missions are followed by a greeting of peace. Each worshipper embraces or kisses the cheek (or the air next to the cheek) of EVERY other worshipper, while also speaking the words: la paz de Christo (the peace of Christ). Though this is often an awkward custom for North Americans, it comes fairly easy to those who live in our region. As I travel to various LAC countries to provide care to our missionaries, I’m usually a stranger to those attending worship services. Still, it is meaningful to be given the “peace of Christ” in those congregations where I am meeting people for the first time. Several New Testament verses come to mind: ‘I was a stranger, and you invited me in’ (Mt.25:35); Greet one another with a holy kiss (2 Cor. 1:12); Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me (Mt. 10:40).”

“What a joy it is for us to be able to share the words of our Savior, The Lord and Prince of Peace, and to have YOU in partnership with us in this venture. We thank God for all of the ways that you serve Him in your Christian walk, wherever you live and whatever your vocation.”

From Deaconess Cheryl, “Just as Advent is a busy season in your homes and churches, the same is true here in the DR, so we will use this end-of-November newsletter to wish all of you a most happy Advent & Christmas!”

The Ferry Family – All Over Asia “Living and serving as we do in Asia, there are very few dull moments. Even the most mundane happenings can be an adventure in Asia going to the market, taking the bus to church, visiting a local restaurant for dinner. After all, we look different, we sound different, we act different from nearly everyone around us. That gives us incredible opportunities in so many “everyday” things to give a faithful witness to the “hope that is within us” (1 Peter 3:15). ---- so many people in Asia want to learn/know English, that they’re willing to approach us and engage in conversation. What a privilege. People in our partner church are no different: they also want their children to know English, and they want to interact with us as foreigners. This is especially true because most Taiwanese people are naturally warm, friendly, and hospitable. And we are here in Taiwan (and in Asia in general) at the request of our local church partner because they want (and we want for them!) to be better able to understand and articulate the Word of God and who He has made them to be in Christ Jesus their Savior.”

“It was a great privilege lately to meet some new friends on a trip to Japan. During a regular visit to check on our workers in the country, I had the privilege of answering a request or a visit of the Japanese Lutheran Brethren Church. They are keen to learn more about our LCMS, and to take advantage of our expertise in theological education as well as our passion for solid theological resources.----God grant much fruit to come from these emerging relationships, for the sake of His Word so more would know Jesus and Him crucified for them!” Pastor Charles Ferry.

The Krey Family, Rev. Ted & Becca-Latin America and the Caribbean - Report from Pastor Krey: “October and November have been a continued flurry of partnership meeting. Travels included visits to our mission fields in Belize, Mexico, Spain and Puerto Rico. The first Lutheran church dedicated in Seine Bight, Beilize, confirmed the 2nd Lutheran in that country; Pastors Felipe Lobo and Isaac Machado installed in Spain; property purchased for a church and mercy center in Ponce, Puerto Rico; first 7 members confirmed at the mission in Ozama, Dominican Republic; 300 boxes of books arrive for the Seminary; eye clinic was held at the mission sites in Peru; new church dedicated in Constitucion, Chile. In our Mexican FORO, we met in Texas along the border and had the privilege of hearing of the founding of Martin Lutero Bible institute and how our Concordia Seminary is preparing some 20 pastoral students and an additional 30 diaconal students. Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good!”

“The third week of November, we received a group of about 20 Venezuelans in the Dominican republic due to the deepening humanitarian crisis it is impossible to enter Venezuela at this time So we bring the Venezuelan pastors here of a one-day FORO with partners and then have them in two days of studying the Scriptures. We send them back with clothes, foods and medicines in support of their families. We are grateful to the LCMS for their support of Venezuela as this crisis with two presidents sitting in Caracas within 3 kilometers of each other continues. Lord-willing, this impasse will come to an end and the country will be permitted to rebuild. Do pray for the Lutheran church there her pastors and people who are giving a faithful witness to Jesus and His saving Gospel to a people in deep need. At the same time, we solicit prayers for the people of Haiti. In a recent conversation Ted had with Pastor Eliona Bernard, president of the Haitian Lutheran church, Bernard stated that a third of Haitians are starving due to the socio-economic conditions The suffering is deep and the crisis is profound, and we pray that the Lord would have mercy and ease the suffering of the people there. We are making an appeal to the LCMS to support relief efforts in Haiti.”

A message from Becca. “This fall ---- I was privileged to attend Trinity Lutheran Church in Berlin, Germany, the home church to hundreds of Iranian and Afghan immigrants. The church was packed full. The singing was beautiful, both in German and Farsi. After the service we shared a meal together and I heard stories of persecution, leaving home, conversion to Christianity. The next week-end, I was back home in the Dominican, with a more typical Sunday like I was used to: sweating, a whining 2 year old on my lap while I played the liturgy on the keyboard, and loud background meringue music or car horns and sirens competing for our attention. It was hard to be distracted from the service this week though, as we were witnessing the first confirmations in the Ozama mission, a neigbourhood in the east side of the Capital, Santo Domingo. It was the birth of a new church and we were all rejoicing! Thanks be to God for all these dear brothers and sister in Christ, from the capital of Germany to the capital of the Dominican Republic!”

The Kasters in Prague Writings from Dale & Suzanne Kaster. “Prague – indeed. The whole Czech Republic – is festooned with Christmas markets. Every square in town has at least a few sheds set up sell decorations, treats, gifts, or seasonal foods. Czechs love this time of year and seem to celebrate it with great joy. But that does not mean they get what it is all about. Recently, we were shopping for some Christmas decorations. There were decorations of lovely stars, angels, and nativities. But then the merchant pointed us to a basket filled with horseshoes, pigs, and shamrocks; all these here are considered tokens for good luck in the coming year. He explained to us that by hanging these on the tree we will be lucky. Than Suzanne spoke up “We don’t need luck. We’re Christian.” At first, it seemed harsh, but, after further thought, perhaps it was the perfect answer. The merchant stumbled to apologize. But we added that Jesus was what we needed more than anything.

During the month of November, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession met in their annual convention. We heard a lot of reports and projections for the coming year(s). One thing missing was an emphasis on outreach to the many Czechs who do not trust in Jesus Christ. Please, pray for the work and the hearts of the ECAV, that a zeal for outreach and evangelization would take hold. Also, pray for the Holy Spirit to bring may Czechs to the faith of Jesus Christ. We commend you and your Christmas celebration to Christ!”

Pastor Edward Naumann – Sri Lanka - Pastor Naumann’s theme for the letter is “Causes for Rejoicing” showing a picture of his beautiful Baby Alfred. At the end of his editorial statement he states “For it is a great privilege to be counted worthy to serve the LCMS overseas, for the sake of the name above every name!” As stated, “Recently I have been directed to concentrate efforts on publications in Sri Lanka, for which reason I hope to have some exciting new developments to report in the coming months. Right now I am working intensively on producing well-edited liturgies in both Sinhala and Tamil. This will especially enable us to assist Tamil-speaking congregations who want to use the form of the Lutheran service, but my not have access to Tamil Lutheran Hymnals. A number of other resources are being made available online for the first time, and printed resources such as catechisms and Sunday School material are planned for the very near future. Sometimes progress can be difficult and slow.” “Please continue your prayers for the safety and peace of all people, especially Christians suffering persecution in both India and in Sri Lanka.”

Lutheran Heritage Foundation - Prayer requests are for Vicar Obed Orishaba – Uganda, for LHF books to teach youth in his country about the Lutheran faith, and for his mother, whose faith in God led her to choose life for her son. Prayers for the Thailand Concordia Lutheran church which recently celebrated 15 years of preaching the Word in Southeast Asia. LHF is thanking God for some of their “behind the scenes” staff of service that has played such an important part in sharing the Good News to more than 80 countries around the world who are now retiring. We wish them God’s blessings.

To everyone, God’s blessings on a day we celebrate Jesus’s birth.

Yours in Christ,

Ruth Crowl

VP Christian Life/Human Care