

FAMILY NEWS

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Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and Academy | Davie, Florida

MARCH 1 IS ASH WEDNESDAY BEGINNING OF PENITENTIAL SEASON OF LENT

Q: Would you please explain the significance of Ash Wednesday. I've seen some people in the past with black ash crosses on their foreheads.



A: Lutheran Worship: History and Practice, a commentary on Lutheran Worship, one of our Synod's hymnals, says this about ashes on Ash Wednesday: "Other customs may be used, particularly the imposition of ashes on those who wish it. This ancient act is a gesture of repentance and a powerful reminder about the meaning of the day. Ashes can symbolize dust-to-dustness and remind worshipers of the need for cleansing, scrubbing and purifying. If they are applied

during an act of kneeling, the very posture of defeat and submission expresses humility before God." The use of ashes on Ash Wednesday is a more recent custom among most LCMS congregations, although some have done it for decades. The ashes are usually derived from the burned palms from the previous Palm Sunday. Experience will show, however, that in obtaining ashes this way, it doesn't take many ashes to "ash" a whole congregation. Like sin, they are very dirty and go a long way. One palm leaf will produce enough ashes for several years. Usually the pastor takes the ashes on the end of his thumb and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each worshiper, saying these words: "Remember: you are dust, and to dust you shall return." This follows most effectively prior (or as part of) the Service Corporate Confession and Absolution on pp. 290-291 of Lutheran Service Book.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LENT?

Q: What is the significance of Lent?

A: Early in the Church's history, the major events in Christ's life were observed with special observances, such as His birth, baptism, death, resurrection and ascension. As these observances developed, a period of time was set aside prior to the major events of Jesus' birth and resurrection as a time of preparation. During Lent, the Church's worship assumes a more penitential character. The color for the season is purple, a color often associated with penitence. The "Hymn of Praise" is omitted from the liturgy. The word "Alleluia" is usually omitted as well. By not using the alleluia--a joyful expression meaning "Praise the Lord"--until Easter, the Lenten season is clearly set apart as a distinct time from the rest of the year. Additionally, it forms a powerful contrast with the festive celebration of Jesus' resurrection when our alleluias ring loud and clear. Finally, the penitential character of Lent is not its sole purpose. In the ancient Church, the weeks leading up to Easter were a time of intensive preparation of the candidates who were to be baptized at the Easter vigil on Holy Saturday. This time in the Church's calendar was seen as an especially appropriate time for Baptism because of the relationship between Christ's death and resurrection and our own in Holy Baptism (see Romans 6:1-11). This focus would suggest that the season of Lent serves not only as a time to meditate on the suffering that Christ endured on our behalf but also as an opportunity to reflect upon our own Baptism and what it means to live as a child of God.



HOW TO PRAY THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

by Matthew C. Harrison (*President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*)

Here's a little piece I wrote as a preface to a collection of biblical texts. It teaches Luther's method of prayer, which interestingly encompasses both rote and free prayer! — Pastor Harrison

Martin Luther wrote a little book on prayer for his barber, Peter. In it, he lays out his simple method of praying texts. It's brilliant. I call it "I.T.C.P":

Instruction

Thanksgiving

Confession

Prayer

The method anchors prayer in the texts of Scripture or the catechism but allows the Holy Spirit to prompt thoughts via the Word, which may be chased more freely by the mind at prayer.

Luther explains his method, using the Ten Commandments:

I think of each commandment as, first, instruction, which is really what it is intended to be, and consider what the Lord God demands of me so earnestly. Second, I turn it into a thanksgiving; third, a confession; and fourth, a prayer. I do so in thoughts or words such as these: "I am the Lord your God, etc. You shall have no other gods before me," etc. Here I earnestly consider that God expects and teaches me to trust him sincerely in all things and that it is his most earnest purpose to be my God...

Second, I give thanks for his infinite compassion by which he has come to me in such a fatherly way and, unasked, unbidden, and unmerited, has offered to be my God, to care for me, and to be my comfort, guardian, help, and strength in every time of need. We poor mortals have sought so many gods and would have to seek them still if he did not enable us to hear him openly tell us in our own language that he intends to be our God. How could we ever—in all eternity—thank him enough!

Third, I confess and acknowledge my great sin and ingratitude for having so shamefully despised such sublime teachings and such a precious gift throughout my whole life, and for having fearfully provoked his wrath by countless acts of idolatry. I repent of these and ask for his grace.

*Fourth, I pray and say: “O my God and Lord, help me by thy grace to learn and understand thy commandments more fully every day and to live by them in sincere confidence. Preserve my heart so that I shall never again become forgetful and ungrateful, that I may never seek after other gods or other consolation on earth or in any creature, but cling truly and solely to thee, my only God. Amen, dear Lord God and Father. Amen” (*Luther’s Works* 43:200).*

Luther’s advice to his barber, Peter, is brilliant. You can pray texts of the Bible, hymns, creed, catechism, etc. Start with the Ten Commandments!

PRINCIPAL’S CORNER

My son Jonathan and his girlfriend, Laci, have developed an avid interest in gardening. Our patio is lush with all sorts of growing vegetables. One morning when the tomato plants got to be about two feet tall, Jonathan noticed a leaf moving. He discovered they had the pesky tomato worms. This was the beginning of picking worms, cutting worms, and spraying for worms in order to save the tomatoes.

In my classroom we are reading Little House in the Big Woods. We were discussing how the family grew or obtained their own food when I mentioned the vegetables growing on our patio and the dreaded tomato worms. Since the students then wanted to see the worms, I asked Jonathan if he could find one for me.

As soon as I brought the worm into the classroom, the students adopted it. They named it Herman. They worried that it might need a larger environment. They discussed what size stick Herman might want to get some exercise. They worried about what Herman would eat. Miss Trudy made a special run to get lettuce for Herman. (Determining what kind of lettuce was a whole other discussion!) Hopefully Herman will survive all the petting and holding!

I realized Herman is a good example of our relationship with God. The world tends to tell us that we are lacking in some way—not enough beauty, or skills, or training, or whatever. In other words, we tend to be an unwanted pest. God, on the other hand, sees us as beautiful and desirable—rather like my students view Herman. God tells us in Isaiah that we are precious to Him and He calls us by name (like Herman). The world’s pests are God’s chosen. How wonderful to realize we are so special to God—just like Herman is to my students.

Sharon Vonada
Interim Principal, Academy



Please join us for
Ash Wednesday Divine Service
Wednesday, March 1st 7:00 p.m.



Soup Suppers

Each Wednesday beginning March 1st a variety of soups and desserts will be offered for your enjoyment beginning at 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall. This is special time of sharing and fellowship. A free will offering will be taken.

If you would like to contribute your favorite soup or dessert, please see the sign-up sheet in the bulletin or call Gayle Caruso at 954-475-0683 ext. 112

SEMINARIAN SPOTLIGHT: THE SESSA FAMILY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you very much! Your generosity floored us once again. We are so grateful for your support.

We have less than 6 months to go! At some point at the end of July or August we will be worshipping with you. We are so excited to be with you once again.

I am really excited for the start of Epiphany, especially the Baptism of our Lord. It's kind of crazy. The spotless lamb humbled Himself to receive John's baptism of repentance even though He had no sin to repent of!

Instead, Jesus stood in our place. We who needed to repent are the ones that Jesus represented in His baptism. So that we are forgiven through Christ



Have a spiffy Epiphany
Sam, Leah, Ben & Charlotte

SEMINARIAN SPOTLIGHT: THE BLANKEN FAMILY

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from “a warmer-than-usual” Fort Wayne, Indiana! We’ve been having this lovely weather (with sunshine) ranging from 40-55 degrees in February, which is almost unheard of here. This “warm weather” here is almost like the “cold fronts” there.

Alex’s classes are coming to a close for this quarter, and he will officially be on a two-week break starting February 24th. As he works toward the finish, there are many exams (some sound really intimidating) to begin preparing for in advance. He continues to meet with his classmates to review and prep each weekend. I enjoy having them over and making them coffee and baking them treats; dorm life can be so hum-drum.

I’ve been back to work for four weeks now, and things are going well. My shared 4th grade classroom is bursting with personality, and the students are getting ready for their standardized testing in two weeks. While I miss Evelyn during the day, I am confident of the quality of care she’s getting and I’m at ease. A Seminary wife from my previous congregation in Peoria, Illinois, watches Evelyn while we’re at work and school. We’re very thankful for her care and attention to our baby.

Evelyn is 10 weeks old now and rapidly growing. She recently started to make cooing sounds. We’ve been able to go on a few brief strolls outside when it’s 50 degrees, which amazes her. She’s a very social little girl and adores when people interact with her. We like reading to her, watching her roll over, and waking her up from her naps when she stretches and smiles. We’re very much in love with our daughter.

Thank you for your correspondence and prayers! It’s always a joy to hear from you and we continually are thinking of you and praying you are all doing well. We do miss you down in Florida, and look forward to visiting this summer!

Your Brother and Sisters in Christ,

Alex, Annie and Evelyn

Please keep our seminarian families in your prayers:

Sam, Leah, Ben and Charlotte Sessa, 10970 Roxbury Plaza, Apt 322, Omaha, NE 68137

Devin, Melissa, Penny and Devin, Jr. Murphy 909 13th St. N, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

Alex and Annie Blanken, 5609 Old Dover Blvd., Apt 6, Ft Wayne, IN 46835



The Blessing of the
Prayer Shawls at the
10:45am Divine
Service on Sunday,
January 29, 2017.

Your American Heritage Girls Troop 1483

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

We had a terrific Fourth Friday Fun Night in January!! One of our Pioneers is working hard to meet the requirements for her Harriet Tubman Level Award. She planned a wonderful Fashion Show, which included outfits from several parts of the world and different time periods. Eliyah gave a historical account of the outfits, had girls and family members model the costumes, and even gave the girls a chance to show their own outfits, while she provided the audience with a description of and interesting details about what each girl was wearing. We all learned so many things about fashion and about history! And, of course, there were refreshments!



There is more exciting news about Troop 1483. We have two new Tenderheart members! Holly and Hailey have decided to join our Troop and that brings our number up to 15. We're shooting for 20 girls before September, so please spread the word and help us to reach our goal.

February 10th is our Daddy/Daughter Dance, so watch for pictures in our contribution to March's newsletter.

Take a look at our bulletin board in the hallway just before you reach the women's bathroom. You will find information about American Heritage Girls as well as information specific to our Troop. You are invited to take the bookmarks and information slips to share with families who have daughters you think might be interested in the program.

Please spread the word about your troop. If anyone is interested in more information, they can contact Jim or Debbie MacGregor at 785-207-3796 or send an email to ahg.fl1483@gmail.com or email Darla Schulte at darla_schulte@bellsouth.net.



February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			9:30am-Joyful Hearts— Women's Bible Study 10:30am-4pm Thrift Shop Open 7pm Divine Service 8pm-Christianity 102 1	5pm-American Heritage Girls 2		3 8am-Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 9am LWML Breakfast & Bible Study 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 4
5 8am-Divine Service 9:30am-Sunday School 10:45am-Divine Service	6 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 7pm—"A Longer Look at the Lessons" Bible Study	7	9:30am-Joyful Hearts— Women's Bible Study 10:30am-4pm Thrift Shop Open 7pm Divine Service 8pm-Christianity 102 8	9 9		10 8am-Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 1pm-GriefShare 11
12 8am-Divine Service 9:30am-Sunday School 10:45am-Divine Service	13 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 6:30pm-School Board Meeting 7pm—"A Longer Look at the Lessons" Bible Study	14 10:45am-Prayer Shawl	9:30am-Joyful Hearts— Women's Bible Study 10:30am-4pm Thrift Shop Open 7pm Divine Service 8pm-Christianity 102 15	16 5pm-American Heritage Girls 17		18 8am-Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 9am LWML Breakfast & Bible Study 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 1pm-GriefShare 6pm-Valentines' Family Game Night 19
19 8am-Divine Service 9:30am-Sunday School 10:45am-Divine Service	20 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 7pm—"A Longer Look at the Lessons" Bible Study	21 6:30pm-Church Council	9:30am-Joyful Hearts— Women's Bible Study 10:30am-4pm Thrift Shop Open 7pm Divine Service 8pm-Christianity 102 22	23 24		25 8am-Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 1pm-GriefShare 26
26 8am-Divine Service 9:30am-Sunday School 10:45am-Divine Service	27 9:30am-1:30pm Thrift Shop Open 7pm—"A Longer Look at the Lessons" Bible Study	28				

BIRTHDAYS

February / March 2017

*Abigail Lehman	2/4	Nancy Hughes	3/8	Idoris Blanken	3/24
*Rev. David Preus	2/4	Barbara Kronk	3/8	Ina Henry	3/25
Wendy Yost	2/4	Ginger Poulos	3/10	Sharon Flynn	3/27
Joy Reitsma	2/8	Wilhelmina Heller	3/12	Nicholas Grillo	3/27
Alexandra Elam	2/9	Donna Croup	3/13	Joan Lee	3/27
Chloe Schmaus	2/10	George Mueller	3/13	Andrew Livengood	3/27
Arlene Francis	2/10	Michel Conner	3/15	Zella Serian	3/27
James Poulos	2/11	*Rev. Adam Lehman	3/16	Richard Francis	3/28
Ronnie Reitsma	2/12	Osvaldo Estrada	3/16	Ava Grillo	3/28
Maria Shore	2/13	Walter Bork	3/17	Gayle Caruso	3/29
Katelyn Grimmett	2/13	Jennifer Cusumano	3/17	Sadie Kern	3/29
Jason Jackson Schulte	2/18	Coco Zheng	3/19	Jim MacGregor	3/29
Jax Rubin	2/27	Lucille Muklewicz	3/20	Vincent Wilson	3/29
Judy Herman	3/2	Shelby Dammann	3/21		
Sal Gianseracusa	3/3	Marie Harbar	3/21		
Chris Saitta	3/4	Tami Maisa	3/21	*Missionary Family	
Bryan Macha	3/7	Victoria Schweiger	3/22		
*Leif Preus	3/7	Melina Guerrero	3/23		

ANNIVERSARIES

February / March 2017

Nicholas and Vera Babzien	2/6	Greg and Toni Grillo	3/1
David and Jeanne Smith	2/12	Sal and Michelle Giansiracusa	3/17
Pastor George and Ginger Poulos	2/12	Bill and Carol Jones	3/26
Dennis and Sharon Adams	2/16	James and Kelly Watkins	3/27
John and Jackie Geromanos	2/21	James and Doris Gilchrist	3/29
Michael and Christina Biscoglio	2/22		
Bruce and Gayle Caruso	2/22		
David Inman & Colleen Gilchrist	3/1	*Missionary Family	



Pray For Us Calendar

These prayer requests were submitted by coworkers in the Lord's mission.

Congregations and individuals are invited to copy these pages for newsletters or other distribution. Download at lcms.org/prayforus or call 888-843-5267 to request a copy.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES — FEBRUARY 1-28 “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God,” Jesus says in Luke 18:16. God wants all His children to have faith in Him, yet sin and brokenness permeate the lives of His people. Children are orphaned, and families are ripped apart. Over the years, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has reached out to care for God’s precious children through the mercy ministries of congregations, missionaries and Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs).

Remember God’s work to support children and families as you pray:

- 1. for all Christians,** that they would help and defend the orphan and widow, the poor and lonely, the homeless and oppressed.
- 2. for all children,** that they might be brought to the waters of Baptism and guided in Your truth from an early age.
- 3. for Christian families,** that they would open up their homes and lives so that all children might live in safe dwellings and loving homes.
- 4. for adoption and foster-care agency workers,** that they would make good and right decisions concerning what is best for all involved — enabling them to find proper families and resources to meet the needs of the children they serve.
- 5. for orphanages around the world,** that they might receive proper funding, food, resources and godly caregivers so that they can provide the best care possible to the children entrusted to them.
- 6. for orphanage workers,** that they might be refreshed by Your Word and become good role models and teachers as they provide loving care to the kids in their charge.
- 7. for all orphans,** that they might find Christian families who will nurture them with the love and knowledge of Christ.
- 8. for all foster children,** that they might find peace amongst the chaos as they wait for a proper family to be established.
- 9. for all people who suffer from domestic violence,** that the Lord would deliver them from danger and comfort them with His peace and forgiveness.
- 10. for all caregivers,** that they might raise children in the way they should go so that they would use their time and talents to glorify God and to serve their neighbor throughout their lives.
- 11. for all children who receive new families,** that they would learn to love and respect their new family just as that family loves and provides for their physical, emotional, intellectual, educational and spiritual needs.



The Rev. Gary Schuschke baptizes Londynn Levin as her mother holds her at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, Oviedo, Fla.



Children sing during Bible study at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya’s Project 24 boys’ boarding-school facility in Kisumu, Kenya.

INVOLVEMENT IDEAS

- The LCMS offers many free resources on topics like domestic violence, child abuse and ministry to those with disabilities. Visit lcms.org/social-issues to learn more.
- Visit lcms.org/rso to learn about the Synod’s Recognized Service Organizations and find ones working near you.
- Want to learn how to be more welcoming of people of all abilities? Find straightforward and inexpensive ideas for your next church event at blogs.lcms.org/2016/the-church-is-for-everyone.

12. *that the parents of adopted and foster children would learn to deal patiently with these children as they experience the grief of losing all that they knew and loved.*

13. *for children in distress, that God would be their source of strength and hope. Pray that He would defend them from all danger and guard and protect them from every evil of body and soul.*

14. *for those children and parents who are deaf, that they might know Your voice and be filled with Your praise.*

15. *for disabled family members, that they would look to You, their Great Physician, for healing of body and soul.*

16. *for the parents of children with special needs. Ask the Lord to fill them with joy and patience as they care for His beloved children.*

17. *for those who suffer from addiction, that You would release them from their dependence on the lifeless stuff of this world so they can find their fulfillment in You, the Lord of life and the giver of all good things.*

18. *for all Lutheran social-service agencies that care for abused, neglected, misguided and abandoned children and youth. Ask the Lord to bless their ministry and help them stay grounded in His Word.*

19. *for all members of the family, that they might deal patiently, respectfully and lovingly with one another, exemplifying Christ in their words and actions.*



Mark 10:14 Program student Madison Hinskey works with her mentor, Sarah Paglini, during an art class at Faith Lutheran Middle School & High School in Las Vegas.

20. *for widows, that they might know You as their faithful bridegroom who will supply for their needs as they live out their lives in purity and prayer — being generous in word and deed.*

21. *for the homeless, that they might find a warm and safe place to lay their heads, food for their bellies, hope for the future and rest in Your truth.*

22. *for the lonely, that they might find comfort in Your promises, fellowship in Your people and fulfillment as they love You and their neighbor.*

23. *for the unemployed, that they might find suitable and fulfilling employment, fair wages, encouraging support and the opportunity to share their time, talent and treasure with those in need.*

24. *for the poor, that they might find true riches in Your Word and be blessed by the generosity of others.*

25. *for children who are missing. Keep them from danger, restore them to their families and give them Your peace and protection.*

26. *for husbands and fathers, that they would love and serve their families just as Christ loved and served His Bride, the Church.*

27. *for peace among siblings. Pray that the Lord would help them love and support each other throughout their lives, instead of being divided by bickering or jealousy.*

28. *for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities around the world, that they might be treated with respect and love as beloved children of their heavenly Father.*

MISSIONARY & PERSONNEL BIRTHDAYS

Download the prayer cards of missionaries and other personnel from lcms.org/prayercards.

Feb. 4 Shara Cunningham, Kenya;
Melissa Hosch, Peru;
Peggy Krikava, Eurasia;
David Preus, Dominican Republic

Feb. 6 Mary Aadland, Kenya;
Marie Dicke, Papua New Guinea;
Matthew Wasmund, South Korea

Feb. 7 Jordan Tomesch, Germany

Feb. 8 Christel Neuendorf, Dominican Republic

Feb. 9 Danelle Putnam, Dominican Republic

Feb. 10 Eric Semler, Asia

Feb. 11 Paul Flo, Dominican Republic

Feb. 13 Tyler McMiller, Dominican Republic

Feb. 15 Johanna Stinnett, Ethiopia

Feb. 19 Debra Freese, Burkina Faso

Feb. 22 Leif Hasskarl, Cayman Islands

Feb. 26 Adam DeGroot, Philadelphia, Pa.

Feb. 28 Mark Mantey, Uganda

MILITARY CHAPLAINS WITH BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY:

Chaplain Charles Mallie, Virginia Beach, Va.; Chaplain Lynn Christensen, Camp Lejeune, S.C.; Chaplain Matthew Christensen, Fort Jackson, S.C.; Chaplain Dann Ettner, Moffett Army Air Base, Calif.

In our June 2015 Gloria Dei Congregational meeting, we formally adopted the Rev. Adam Lehman family as our missionaries to Spain.

Lehman Family Newsletter

An update from your missionaries serving our Lord in Spain



Celebrating the kids' hard work in school this trimester



Preaching practicum for pastors and seminarians, held in Seville.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

These have been very busy times for the Lutheran Church of Spain. But times in which our Lord is blessing your Spanish brothers and sisters greatly!

We have been able to secure a rental property for the congregation in Seville. We had previously been renting a conference room in a hotel for our Services on Sunday mornings. This rental property makes it possible for us to have our own space, which we can use 24/7. This is a first for the Lutherans in Spain! This property was formerly a discotheque, so there is much work to do (like cleaning, painting, electrical work, etc.) in order to get this property where we want it to be, but what blessed work it is! We have been able to draw a lot of attention in the neighborhood, and I am looking forward to seeing what the Lord will do there!

We have also been blessed to be steadily teaching the faith to new members, and are encouraged that the Lord continues to grow this humble but faithful church here in Spain. We thank you for your continued prayers and support in this blessed work of sharing the Good News of Jesus with the people in this beautiful country.

How to Contact and Support Pastor Lehman

Blog:

www.staticadventures.wordpress.com

Email:

adam.lehman@lcmsintl.org

Giving Page:

www.lcms.org/lehman

You may support my work with a tax-deductible gift on my Giving Page (listed above), or with a check payable to "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod." Be sure to include "Lehman-Spain" on the memo line, and send to:

Mission Central,
40718 Highway E-16
Mapleton, Iowa, 51034



To have your name added or removed from the newsletter mailing list, simply send an email to adam.lehman@lcmsintl.org and include either "ADD" or "REMOVE" in the subject line.

The kids have recently finished their first trimester of this school year, and they continue to amaze Christine and I with how quickly they have been able to adapt to learning everything in their new language. Thanks be to God for such a great blessing!

Also, Hannah and Noah have been learning karate for a while now and are very happy to have become the newest yellow belts in Spain!

We have also received very good news regarding our visa renewal applications. After a couple of bumps in the road toward renewal, we have been approved for a 2-year renewal of our visas. We are grateful for the help and support of many people here in Spain, in the Dominican Republic, and in St. Louis for helping to make it happen. Mission work is indeed always a team effort!

And with that in mind, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support for the mission in Spain. The truth is, without your help and support I simply could not be here proclaiming the Gospel in Spain. You are an important part of this mission. We have been living here in Spain for over a year now, and there has never been a moment where we didn't feel supported by our brothers and sisters back in the U.S. You are a great blessing to us, and I thank our Lord for you every day.

I would also like to thank you for your continued prayers for my family. The emails and messages that I receive from you are a great encouragement to us. It is a great comfort to us to know that we continue in your prayers. Please know that you continue in our prayers as well. May the peace of Christ be with you today and forever!

**Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Adam Lehman**

In our June 2015 Gloria Dei Congregational meeting, we formally adopted the Rev. David Preus family as our missionaries to the Dominican Republic.

The Preus Family in the Dominican Republic

Feliz Epifanía!

Dear Christian friends and partners in Christ's mission: Happy Epiphany! On Christmas Day, Christ joined our family forever. During this season, we celebrate the same Jesus who now invites us to become part of His family and share in His glory. The pace of life has really picked up here in the Dominican Republic. We hope you enjoy our updates and photographs that tell the story. Your continued prayers and support are so appreciated.

"Poco a poco"

"Poco a poco," a common phrase I'm sure I overuse each day, means, "little by little." That's the life of the Preus family in the Dominican Republic. We have just entered our third month of missionary life, and each day has its new challenges even as we march forward to accomplish our four-month goals. (The orientation period officially lasts four months, and then I will assume my fulltime load as pastor.) We keep plugging along with the Spanish-in-the classroom every Tuesday to Friday, through occasional preaching, teaching the Augsburg Confession to our deaconess students, and conducting the liturgy each Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. This Wednesday, Vicar Idjon and I began visiting each member and former member of our congregation, while looking for opportunities to make evangelism calls in the community. Soon, I will add to my routine the regular preaching at the Escuela Luterana la Concordia (Concordia Lutheran School) every other Friday morning. Meanwhile, during the evening hours, I am working hard to develop a curriculum proposal for our new seminary, which is due to open this July.



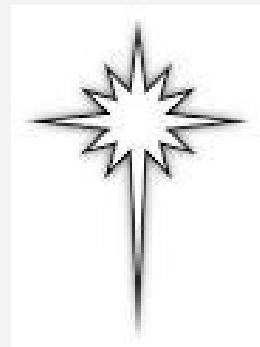
Buying avocados and bananas from a street vendor a few blocks from our house.

I look forward to my installation as pastor of Iglesia Luterana la Concordia (Concordia Lutheran Church) on March 5 at the eight o'clock morning service. God has given us a tremendous opportunity to feed the people of Palmar Arriba with his everlasting Word, the food that endures forever (John 6:27). While, it is true that we have more to do than is possible, we commend all things to God for whom nothing is impossible (Matthew 19:26). In addition to work and study, the family has enjoyed a few outings around town, mostly shopping excursions, and we've also visited a few cultural sites on the city center. We are certainly enjoying the Dominican cuisine and we are blessed to be surrounded by good people. We look forward to many more adventures and continued blessings from

Who can this be?

Everything in the Bible was written to answer the question Jesus' disciples asked with astonishment upon watching their Lord calm the ferocious sea. "Who can this be," they ask, "that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" This is the most fundamental question in all of Scripture: Who is this? He is an ordinary man who sleeps because He's tired. He's like you and me: flesh and blood, born of a woman, born under the law, living under certain weather conditions. And this man is also God. He is the Lord and Creator of everything. He is the eternal Son of God by whom and through whom all things were made. His Word sustains the world; His voice directs its course and authorizes its seasons. He is both 100% God and 100% man. That is what we know about Jesus because that's what the Bible, which is God's Word, reveals to us.

During Epiphany, we celebrate the God-man. "Who can this be?" Who is the baby in the manger? Who is the twelve-year-old boy in the temple? Who is the humble guest with his mother at the Wedding of Cana? Who is the man sleeping in the boat? Who is the man who stands upon the Mountain of Transfiguration, His face shining as bright as the sun? Who is the man who sets His face to Jerusalem to carry the world's sins to the cross? He is our powerful Savior. He is our gracious Lord. By His might He has ordered heaven and earth to serve His grace towards us sinners. As great and powerful as God is, He is even more gracious. Everything He did from His birth to His death to His resurrection to His ascension to the right hand of God-everything He is from eternity to eternity-is pure love-in-action for us. How blessed we are to know as missionaries that the One who has been given all power in heaven and on earth is the One who sends missionaries to bring His mercy to every nation! He is with us, and even when we are assailed by tempests and trials, the sea rises against us, and our best efforts are fraught with difficulty, our mission-no, His mission-will succeed!



Reflections from home, by Jennifer

We have been up to muchas cosas (many things) since you last heard from us! The older kids have been studying American history in homeschool as well as their daily math and other subjects. Our free time consists of game nights, reading aloud as a family, frequent get-togethers with other missionary friends, and playing outside with the water-hose, on the (fenced-in) rooftop, picking lemons and peas from our backyard trees, or just lounging on the porch for an afternoon siesta. We have also taken some field trips around Santiago as well as attending weekly church services at the mission plants. Hans has started reading the Inheritance series and Rebekah is enjoying the Babysitter Club stories. We have recently gotten a membership at a local school's library that rents out books in English, which is helping to quell their unceasing appetite for more books! Having received an electronic keyboard from Jenny's parents for Christmas, the older four kids have resumed piano practice again. The little boys (Søren and Leif) have recently started attending a nearby preschool during the weekday morning hours of 8am-12pm. The main reason for this is to give them a start on learning Spanish while also making it possible for Jenny to leave the house for three hours every morning for her formal Spanish language lessons at the Berlitz language center. David is in his third month of language learning there and has about one more month of classes to go before he is done with initial, formal language training. Meanwhile, he continues to assist with the liturgy during church services, provide visitation with members, and many other various tasks as need arises, such as most recently helping to paint the church sanctuary in Palmar Arriba. We are thankful for an overall smooth transition toward establishing our family home here, and we pray for continued good health, productivity, and contentment in the months ahead as we live and serve for the purpose of teaching the pure and saving gospel of Jesus Christ, whose perfect sacrifice on the cross covered the sins of people in every nation, and here in the Dominican Republic!



Family outing at a museum in downtown Santiago

Hasta la Proxima!

Until the next edition of "The Preus Family in the Dominican Republic," we wish you safe passage through this present winter. (I heard it got pretty cold up there!) Soon we will be in that holy season of Lent anticipating the dawn of Christ's righteousness through His glorious resurrection from the dead. How blessed we are to have such a solid hope! Please stay with us as we journey through the Lord's vineyard in the Dominican Republic. We love you and cherish your thoughts, prayers, and financial support!

In Christ,

Pastor David Preus and family



Freshly painted sanctuary in Palmar Arriba.

To support our work financially, you may send a tax-deductible gift to: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861. Make check payable to The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod or LCMS. Include "Preus-Dominican" in the memo line. Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website at <http://www.lcms.org/preus>.

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WORD ON STEWARDSHIP

We've all heard that stewardship is giving to the church of our time, talents, and treasure. This alliterative trinity helps us see that giving is not just about money, but about our whole lives. For God has given us everything we have and enjoy as we confess in the meaning to the First Article of the Apostle's Creed. And what we confess first among those is that God gives us "our body and soul, our eyes, ears, and all our members, our reason and all our senses." Only then do we confess that he gives us material things. Thus the time, talents, and treasure trinity places before our eyes the fact that we are to give something of all of these things toward the mission of the church in thanksgiving for what God has provided. For everything we have and indeed everything we are comes from God's fatherly divine goodness and mercy.

The problem with this alliterative trinity comes when we replace one little word with another little word—when we replace the word and with the word or. It is always written with the and, but when we read it, we read it with the or. Thus this quite helpful trinity, which extolled that everything that we have and are is a gift from God and which is to be pressed into the service of God in His church, turns into a trinity that we can pick and choose which of the trinity we use into the service of God. The giving of our time, talents, and treasure turns into the giving of our time, talents, or treasure.

Then the question arises: Can we give of our time and talents instead of our treasures? Or perhaps it is the other way round: Can we give our treasure and not of our time and our talents? But these are the wrong questions. The right question is, can we give of our time and our talents in addition to our treasure? Yes, indeed, we are called to give of all three. The things that God gives us are not to be pitted against one another. They are given to us and we are to press them all into God's service for benefit of His church and our neighbors in need.

Thus we give all three. We give our treasure in the form of a generous, first-fruits, proportion of our income. We give of our time in generosity for the benefit of Christ's holy church. We give of our talents in the same manner. Since God gave us all these things, we are called to give generously of all these things in faith toward Him and in fervent love to our neighbors.

For God has provided all these things to us. Out of His fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, He gives us each time, talents, AND treasures as a means to bless those around us. We serve our neighbors with these things, blessing them with the blessings in which God has blessed us. We give of our time, talents, and treasures to our families, our society, and to our church, our local congregations. And we do this because we know that we are not our own. Rather, we belong to God. We have been bought with a price—with the holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He gave everything—His time, His talents, and His treasure,—to have us as His own and to live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. We have these things as gifts and blessings from God. Let us then press them all into service for the sake of His love—time, talents, and treasures together.

There are a few things that are certain in life. One of these things is grief over the death of a loved one or friend. Facing death and dealing with the aftermath can be a traumatic experience, even for the toughest among us. But there is a way forward.

Everyone deals with grief differently. Some people cannot stop the tears; others have none. Some hold on to personal belongings for years while others will get rid of them immediately. Either path is okay. Some people take no time to work through grief while many others hold onto their grief for months, years and yes, sometimes decades. There is no special "fix".

Hurt helps others navigate the painful road of grief – an often unspoken, but powerful aspect of mental, emotional and physical health. We teach our children to balance their checkbook or fill out an application for a job, but yet, death is inevitable and we are all, at some point going to be at that crossroad. Yet, within our culture, we do not discuss the painful paths of grief. Employees are given three or four days off to do what is necessary and to return to their jobs thereafter. And the grieving are expected to put their experience aside.

Grief differs from person to person, based on many factors including the relationship shared with the deceased or the manner in which he or died, etc.

By attending a GriefShare support group, participants learn to identify the various paths grief can and will take in their personal lives, develop an understanding of the multiple emotions attached to grief. They learn that pain and joy coexist. We address such topics as "Is this normal?.....Why?.....Guilt and Anger....Stuck.....Lessons of Grief....What do I live for now?" just to name a few....

The foregoing thoughts have been expressed on our GriefShare Leadership Forum by many facilitators who share their failures and successes on a daily digest forum provided by Church Initiative, producer of GriefShare, DivorceCare, DivorceCare4Kids, Single Parenting, etc.

During a recent session regarding how grief affects our overall health, several participants immediately pursued making appointments with their physicians. Grief does affect one's physical health.

Gloria Dei is in its 15th year of providing GriefShare to our church family and the surrounding communities. Group 27 meets each Saturday in the Chapel. New participants are asked to come in at 12:30 pm for registration/welcome time. We open with prayer at 1:00 and we are out by 3:00 pm. Registration is \$25.00 which covers the cost of the accompanying workbook, Resource Book and Tool Box. Since each session is "self-contained", anyone who has experienced a loss through death, can join the group and catch up during the next cycle.

For more information regarding GriefShare, check out www.gloria-dei.org or you can visit www.griefshare.org; click on "find a group" for local churches who sponsor this ministry. Or call the Church Office or Linda Malone at 954-270-3321 if you have any questions.

In His Service, the GriefShare Team (Judy, Millicent, Linda, and Marian)

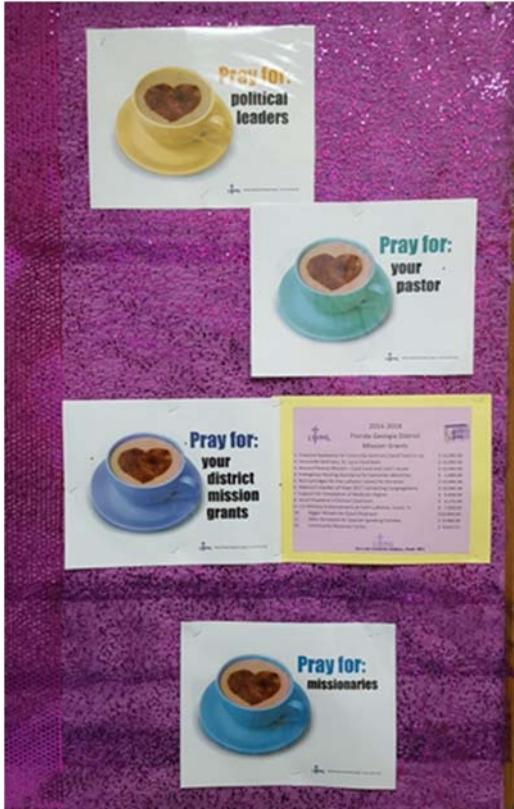


Lutheran Women's Missionary League



Opa! What a wonderful time we had watching
“My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2”

We all agreed that this one was so enjoyable and the food and drinks
were great too! Please join us in July for our next movie day!



Please check out the purple board in the hallway for what we are praying for each month. These are suggestions from the LWML website. Please check out the websites for more information.

www.lwml.org

www.flgalwml.com

Keep collecting those mites!
We collected \$90.50 in
January!

If you need a mite box please
pick one up at the purple table!

Please join us on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month at 9:00 a.m. for Breakfast/Bible Study. All women of Gloria Dei are invited to share in the fellowship, food and studying God's word.

BIBLE STUDIES

Fatherhood with Joel Biermann

Fatherhood is more than providing half the genetic material at conception; it's being there for the long haul. In Fatherhood with Joel Biermann the Concordia Seminary professor and dad relates how being a father is a demanding pursuit with a heavenly goal—raising kids who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



Men's Breakfast and Bible Study
Every Saturday 8 a.m.
in the Fellowship Hall,
Followed by Bible Study In Room 32
Hot Breakfast \$4.00
For more info contact Bruce Caruso
at 954-962-4186



Joyful Hearts
Women's Bible Study
Meets on Wednesday
9:30 a.m.
in the chapel.

All women are welcome!



Please join the women of the
Lutheran Women's Missionary
League

1st and 3rd Saturdays
at 9 a.m.—11 a.m.
for Breakfast/Bible study
We will meet in the chapel.
All women are invited!

PASTOR Poulos LEADS THE FOLLOWING BIBLE STUDIES

Sunday mornings, 9:30 a.m. "Bible Foundations!"
Why we believe what we believe!

Wednesday Nights, 8:00 p.m. - 8:45 p.m. "Christianity 102:"
The Lutheran Difference

Monday Night Bible Study
meets each Monday in the
chapel at 7 p.m.

**They are studying "A Longer
Look at the Lessons"**

**Delve deeper into each
week's three Scripture
readings with "A Longer Look
at the Lessons."** This Bible
study is based on the
lectionary in the Lutheran
Service Book, and provides
information about the
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**For more information please
contact Elaine Carstens 954-
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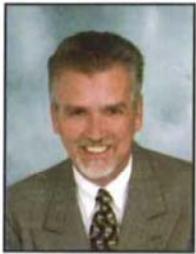
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