

In The Way

November 2015



The St-Onge Family

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The Work Up North

On Sunday, November 1 the English and French congregations celebrated Reformation with a bilingual service. The LSB Divine Service IV is identical to the French Liturgie C, so people could participate in whatever language they felt most comfortable. I preached first in English; Pastor Somers followed in French. We had over 80 people attend a potluck luncheon afterward with food from almost every corner of the globe.

A few days afterwards I led a bilingual funeral service for a member of Ascension, a beloved Montréal-area teacher. Since his widow and most the attendees were French-speakers, I once again led a bilingual service with a sermon mostly in English but partly in French.

And on Sunday, November 8 I preached and led worship in both the English and French services. It was a truly bilingual start to the month!

The Work Down South

Most of my work in the Caribbean this month has been pastoral and administrative. We are preparing strategic plans for the Caymans, Puerto Rico and Jamaica, and budgets to support those plans.

Ministry to children will be expanding on all three islands. I'm continuing to work with our deaconesses in the Dominican Republic to train women for mercy work in Jamaica. This could be a big part of expanding children's work in the Kingston area. In Puerto Rico, we want to expand the outreach to children at Principe de Paz in Mayaguez and elsewhere. And Safe Harbour Lutheran in the Caymans is investigating early childhood ministry.

We also have future pastors and deaconesses identified in Jamaica and Puerto Rico, and I'm assisting with plans to begin their training. I'm currently drafting an eight-hour "What Is a Pastor?" intensive that could be used for possible candidates to the ministry or for deployed missionaries in need of additional training.

I've also been helping with Richard Schuller's continued recuperation in Houston, Texas. We hope to have Richard and Gema back in Puerto Rico soon.

Mission Moment

Tanya (not her real name) is a lapsed Roman Catholic whose mother had begun attending Ascension. At an invitation she had begun attending a 7th Day Adventist congregation years ago, and eventually her family joined.

The longer she attended, the more law-driven she realized everything was. She was criticized for what she wore, what she ate, and how much she was giving to the church. Finally, she left the church and no longer attends worship services anywhere.

Her mother was distraught about her daughter's experience and hoped she would come to Ascension. I spoke with Tanya on the phone and assured her that when she was ready for a visit I would be available.

Since we first spoke, she has attended our tea and bake sale and arranged a visit, but had to cancel at the last minute. I've continued to speak with her, and her mother and I have assured her Christ's church's door is open when she is ready. But it may take some time to overcome her hurt.

There are many church bodies in Quebec where the Law rules over the Gospel. The 7th Day Adventists have 39 congregations in Quebec with over 7,000 members and are continuing to grow. By contrast, there are only seven organized confessional Lutheran churches in the province served by five pastors, counting under 200 members. But the Gospel is greater than our resources or numbers!



Words from Deborah

What a joy it is to welcome visitors to our home and to this area and to share in person the opportunities available for mission here and give a taste of Quebecois culture. It is also helpful for the girls to be with family and people they know (or who at least know them). This month we reconnected with Scott and Noreen Linke from Memorial Lutheran in Houston, TX and we also had a visit from Auntie Ann Smith (aka "The Queen") who was one of only two people left in our immediate families that had not yet been here. We appreciated her help with hanging mirrors, lights, and shelving. Uncle Brent, you're up next!

One of the activities with Ann was a trip to the local bowling alley. We discovered that Canadian bowling balls (at least in this place) are smaller, have no holes, and seem to all be the same weight. It was fun to try out this new way and it was an automatic handicap for the grown-ups.

We have finished the church year and are now entering the season of preparation. Fall decorations are stored for the year, lights are strung outside (but not turned on), and I have located the Advent wreath. In addition to preparing our home, we will prepare out hearts to receive whatever the Lord has in store for us. We continue to rejoice in His blessings and will especially give thanks with Americans this Thursday as we experience "just another day" here in Deux-Montagnes. We are THANKFUL for your prayers and continued support.

Pictures:

Top: weekly young adult bible study at Gare Centrale in downtown Montreal; Middle: Joint English-French Reformation Sunday potluck at Ascension; Bottom: Pastor Charles St-Onge and Pastor David Somers, serving communion during the joint Reformation service.



Prayer Concerns

For the many people I have met in Québec who have been hurt by the legalism of the churches here, that we might offer them a place where the Gospel of Jesus predominates and refreshes,

For Richard Schuller, that his recovery might continue and that he and Gema might soon return to the mission field,

For Charles, as his French returns and he picks up Spanish again, that the Lord of Pentecost might provide him with tongues to speak God's Word.

Support this Work

Make checks payable to The LCMS, memo line: St-Onge Family Support, and send to:

Mission Central
40718 Highway E16
Mapleton, IA 51034

or

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
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