

In The Way

September 2017

The St-Onge Family
244 21e Avenue
Deux-Montagnes, QC
J7R 4H1 Canada

charles.stonge@lcmsintl.org
intheway.org

Work Up North

The Lord keeps blessing his Word in Montreal, and is opening up new possibilities for ministry and mission. We have students coming from across the US and Canada who attend Ascension while studying at McGill, Concordia, Université du Quebec or Université de Montreal. An asylum seeker from Indonesia will be joining our congregation in October. She became a Lutheran through our mission work in Asia – praise the Lord for our witness around the world! We had a young couple from India's Punjab province attend on Sunday, who I immediately hooked up with some of our young members from just across the border in Punjabi Pakistan (a little knowledge of geopolitics is important in Montréal!). I will be marrying two of our young adults, one from Costa Rica who joined three years ago, and one from Madagascar – a trilingual couple!

But the big project on our plates this month and next is our multilingual Reformation celebration on October 29. Members of the English and French congregations have been working closer together than ever for this event. We expect to fill our fellowship hall to overflowing with members and friends and invited guests for an international luncheon afterward. A Cameroonian balafon group will be the lunch hour entertainment. I have been visiting local dignitaries to invite them, including our federal Member of Parliament who, in his "other job", is Prime Minister of Canada. Because EVERYONE needs the Gospel, and Ascension is the "Good News Place."

Work Down South

September has been a stormy month – literally – and that has occupied a lot of my "down south" time and energy. Irma passed by the Dominican Republic while I was visiting our interim pastor Rev. David Lampman in the Caymans. The storm knocked out air traffic control in Jamaica, forcing me to miss my last Sunday in Kingston. I spent it instead with our congregation in George Town.

Then came Hurricane Maria, another one for the history books. We made the decision to evacuate our remaining missionary family in Puerto Rico back to the United States. The Rueschs are currently in Wisconsin. The Schullers were already in the US, having weathered Hurricane Harvey in the Houston area raising support for their work in Ponce. Our Disaster Response team, regional mission team, and I are putting together plans for the next steps for our work in the commonwealth. **(con't next page)**

Mission Moment

Does your neighborhood know that you exist? One of the greatest challenges facing urban congregations, especially small ones, is letting people know who you are and why you exist. Many of you have seen the banners we've mounted on our bell tower. Two of our new members have taken a lead in turning our main street frontage into a mini-botanical garden and keeping it mowed.

Bruce, out mowing the lawn, noticed someone stopping to look at the Reformation 500 banner that proclaims that we preach "Christ crucified" in French, English and Chinese. He struck up a conversation with this man, a professor formerly from Syria who had abandoned faith. He asked whether Bruce knew the kinds of people who live in our neighborhood (i.e., many are Muslim). When Bruce said yes, he paused, then said, "Don't you know how much people around here hate you?"

"And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved." (Mark 13:13). Sometimes the call of mission is to proclaim that which the world cannot stand.



Work Down South (con't)

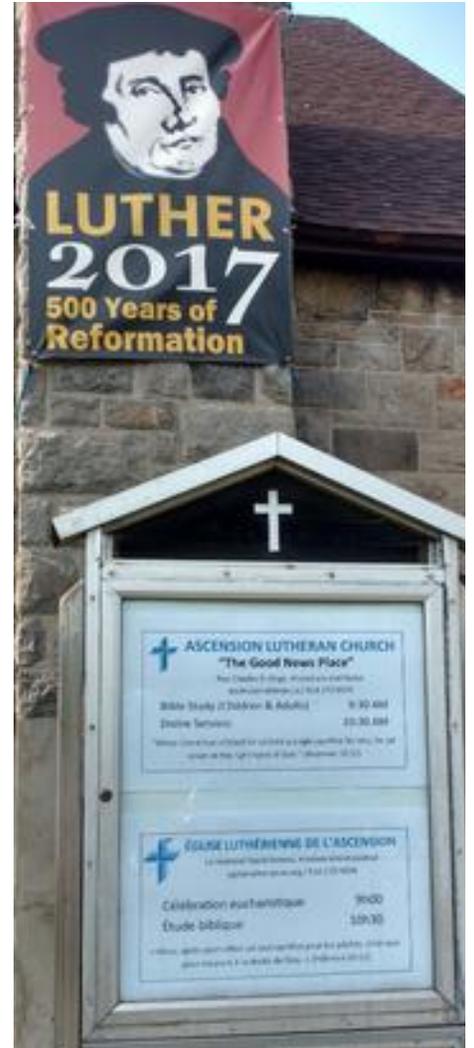
The devastation on the island is hard to overstate. We are still trying to reestablish communication with most members of our congregation, as internet and cell service remains down on most of the island. Not only is power scarce, there have been reports of parts of the water system being down. Portions of the road network are still impassible. Mayaguez' center city has some limited power, but we are unsure of what the state of things is in Ponce.

We had been planning an initial investigation trip the first week of October, which was already pushed back from this week, but commercial flights are still not completely up and running. We desperately want to get back to work and bring help, but we also don't want to hamper the recovery effort.

The plan I've helped work out for the Schuller and Rueschs is dependent on many unknowns. For the next three weeks, they will remain in the US. After that, a decision will be made as to whether they can return to Puerto Rico. If they cannot, we have plans for them to help with work in the Dominican Republic. Normally there are direct JetBlue flights linking the DR with PR, as well as a ferry from Santo Domingo to Mayaguez and San Juan, so that seems to be the best temporary base of operations.

I'm also continuing the search for a permanent mission solution for the Caymans. Pastor Leif Hasskarl was installed into a new parish in Nebraska last month, for which we give thanks to God.

A Picture's Worth of Words...



Top: English worship at Ascension in September. Right: New church signs for Ascension, "The Good News Place." Above Left: Joelle McCrae, elder in Caymans, reads the lessons. Above Middle: With the Lampmans in the Caymans.

Prayer Concerns

For the people of Puerto Rico, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ, that they might patiently on the Lord and that the He might use us in the recovery efforts there;

For those in southeastern Texas and in Florida recovering from the devastating flooding and destruction brought by Harvey and Irma, including many of our supporters;

For our Reformation celebration in Montreal, that the Lord might use it to bring the Gospel to many!

Support this Work

You can donate online at lcms.org/givenow/stonge. Or you may send a cheque, payable to **The LCMS**, to the addresses below. Include **St-Onge – LAC** in the memo line.

Mission Central
40718 Highway E16
Mapleton, IA 51034

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861