

# In The Way

October 2017

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## Work Up North

On October 29<sup>th</sup> Ascension celebrated the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation in grand style. We had over 150 in attendance at our bilingual service on Sunday morning. Both the French LCC and the English LCMS congregations worshipped and received the Lord's Supper together, with some members of our Chinese congregation attending as well. Pastor Somers, Pastor Jacobsen of our partner church in Brazil, and myself led worship. Deb was up in the balcony helping direct a small choir, and one of our talented musical families contributed clarinet, viola and cello to the music. You can watch a video of the procession at the beginning of the service on our website.

Susia Lim, who became a Christian through our mission work in Indonesia, joined our congregation on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 8. On October 14, Deb helped out with music at a day-long women's retreat in Montreal while I was in Jamaica. On October 26 I presented the history of the Reformation to 70+ 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders at Sophia's public school, Mountainview Elementary.

Monday, October 30, I had the opportunity to attend a "pub" event featuring a local Reformed professor (an acquaintance of mine), a Baptist church planter, and the Archbishop of Montreal on the subject of the Reformation. Without knowing it, all of them echoed our Synod's own motto for the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: "The Church must still be all about Jesus."

## Work Down South

A quick look at my calendar reveals how important work in Puerto Rico has become. I've easily spent 50% of my time the last month working on projects related to the Commonwealth and its recovery from Hurricane Maria.

One of the biggest challenges to our plans came in mid-October, when Rev. Matthew Ruesch announced that he had accepted a call to serve a congregation in Michigan. His last day in Puerto Rico will be November 17. At the same time we are planning on having two short-term disaster relief workers come to the island. One will start in a week and remain indefinitely, the other at the beginning of December and stay until the end of January.

Owing to Maria, we had to rethink Puerto Rico as the site of our next Foro meeting. All my thanks to Pastor Dahlke and Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in West Des Moines, IA, who answered my call for a place on the mainland to meet. November 6-7 we will ask the Lord to lead us in a new plan for our work in the commonwealth. **(con't next page)**

## Mission Moment

How should the church relate to its local government? In some places the government is hostile to the church or even to religion in general. We served in a large country in Asia (let the reader understand) where we couldn't let the country know we were there at all. There could be no relationship with the government.

In other places the government is very pro-church and may even consider itself Christian. In Jamaica it is good for pastors to develop a relationship with local government leaders. Our men's bible study in downtown Kingston takes places in a public community centre, for example.

In some places, the government is simply indifferent to the church and religion. Quebec considers itself a wholly secular state, and just passed a bill banning the wearing of anything that would cover the face while receiving government services. We took the opportunity of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation to invite our borough mayor and members of parliament to attend our service and luncheon. Some did, some did not.

How does your church or mission relate to the government?



## Down South (con't)

In mid-October, however, my thoughts turned to Jamaica as I helped host our first ever Foro for the country in Kingston. Our missionary there, Rev. Obot Ite, returned from his furlough in Nigeria reinvigorated for his work on the island. We were able to tour the new ministry centre whose purchase is almost completed. In fact I just received notice that our title is now clear, and that we have been granted access to the facility pending final approval of sale. That means: short term teams, rev your engines, because we have some renovation work to do!

We have some leads on potential supporters in Nebraska. Pastor Krey and I will be following up on some next week. We believe we are close to finding a way to bring a second missionary to the island. This would help us expand existing work, as well as, Lord willing, lead to the planting of a third congregation.

The next three months look quite busy in the Caribbean. Pray for good weather, good strategy, and the Lord's blessing on the spread of the Gospel. **See more pictures online at [intheway.org](http://intheway.org)!**

## A Picture's Worth of Words...



**Top:** 500th luncheon, hall filled to capacity!  
**Middle Left:** With borough mayor Anie Samson.  
**Bottom Left:** Deb St-Onge (English) and Rena Detlefson (French), helping make it all happen!  
**Middle Right:** Pastor Krey speaking to our Foro in Jamaica. **Bottom Right:** With John Thevenot, presenting on the Reformation.

## Prayer Concerns

For the people of Puerto Rico, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ at Principe de Paz who are awaiting a new shepherd, and for Pastor Richard Schuller, Pastor Krey and myself as we serve them in their vacancy;

For the people of Montreal who, in the words of many Christian leaders, are thirsty for Jesus, that they might find churches that proclaim him clearly and with winsomeness;

For those celebrating Thanksgiving this month, that they might receive all things with joy.

## Support this Work

You can donate online at [lcms.org/givenow/stonge](http://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.

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