



Work Up North

We are only a few weeks into 2020, and already we are learning to expect the unexpected. As part of my continuing education I attended the annual symposium at Fort Wayne, spending a good chunk of time reconnecting with networks of supporters and also doing some recruiting for the Cayman Islands and Jamaican mission fields.

On Thursday at the closing banquet I was seated with the leadership of India Evangelical Lutheran Church for reasons that weren't exactly clear. But as I introduced myself to the table I realized that one of the leaders, Ravi Jesupatham, had been corresponding me the week before by email! His daughter Angel has been studying at McGill University. He was coming to Montreal that weekend to make sure she got to church. I was able to pick both of them up at the Metro and bring them to Ascension. It happened to be a Sunday where many of our new Indian guests were attending. The Lord does all things well!

I will have four adults from India joining me for instruction this coming Sunday, the will of the Lord permitting. We rejoice at being able to be a "Good News place" for these dear new friends and their children – who we hope to baptize soon!

Work Down South

The major news from down south, of course, is the earthquakes. Only one day after arriving in Belize for our annual regional planning meeting, I found myself headed over to Puerto Rico. I spent several days on the ground with our director of disaster response, Ross Johnson, and our regional director Ted Krey.

I will be joining the team in Puerto Rico again on Monday to assist with the disaster response in Ponce. The biggest challenge now is finding a safe place to meet while we assess what repairs will be needed to our church campus downtown. While working on this response a 7.7 earthquake, 20 times stronger than the strongest quake in Puerto Rico, struck between the Caymans and Jamaica. The damage in the Caymans is limited, but people are still – pardon the pun – shaken.

As I shared with LCMS communications, and as was written in the Reporter earlier this week, the greatest need in Puerto Rico right now is for counsellors and pastors to bring comfort to a people living in great anxiety. I'm also working to make sure our missionaries on the ground get the comfort and rest that they need.

Mission Moment

The number of questions being asked made me wish we had more time, and that we had more resources to devote to campus ministry...

Thanks to an invitation from a McGill student who attends Ascension, I had the opportunity to speak at the university as part of a week of Christian outreach called "Relevant". After a half hour talk about science and religion, we moved into a time of Q&A. Questions ran from "how can the vicious God of the Old Testament be reconciled with the merciful Father of Jesus?" to "What do I tell my Christian friend dealing with depression who is concerned he might commit suicide?" The estimate was that half of the 30 or so students attending this lunch hour presentation were non-Christians, invited by Christian friends.

Opportunities for outreach are all around, if you know where to look and are ready to take them.



A Picture's Worth of Words



Top Left: worshipping in the garage of the Neuendorfs home in Ponce, Puerto Rico the Sunday after the 6.4 earthquake in Puerto Rico. **Top Right:** Front page of the San Juan Star the days after the earthquake. **Bottom Right:** Ravi Jesupathem in the foreground at our symposia banquet. **Bottom Left:** "Build on the rock the church shall stand / even when steeples are falling / crumbled have spires in every land / bells still are chiming and calling / calling the young and the old to rest / but above all the soul distressed / longing for rest everlasting."

Prayer Concerns

For the people of Puerto Rico that they might find peace in Christ, and for the missionaries serving them that they might not grow weary in doing good,

For Emilie Stoller, a deaconess in training preparing to serve her internship with us in Montreal,

For our ministry in the Cayman Islands, that the Lord would give us wisdom in our service to the flock whom Christ Jesus has called their to himself.

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.

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