

In The Way

January 2021



The St-Onge Family
charles.stonge@lcms.org
intheway.org
244 21e Avenue
Deux-Montagnes, QC
J7R 4H1 Canada

Work Up North

Our New Year started with a continuing rapid increase in COVID cases across most of southern Quebec, and especially here in Montreal. The hardest hit areas have been lower-income neighborhoods with high concentrations of health care workers and schools. As I've mentioned before, Quebec's government has prioritized keeping schools open, which has been a source of some small contention. Since January 18, Olivia and the three upper grades of high school have been alternating in person and online school days, and Sophia has had in-person classes every day. Vaccine rollout has been slow; about 230,000 out of 8 million have been "poked" at this point.

Quebec is also planning to strengthen its French-language laws this year. There is growing concern at the seeming increase of English in Montreal, and a desire to clamp down on its use. This is part of the governing party's commitment to "Quebec nationalism," and includes restrictions on immigration, a new "buy Quebecois" online shopping portal, and a request that the federal government make French the language of business in its offices. While the focus of my work in Montreal is in English, it is impossible to ignore the linguistic reality of our community. Whatever color our boat may be, the ocean we are afloat in is French-speaking.

Worship services are now limited to 10 at a time. Given that we share our building with three other worshipping communities, we cannot simply add more service times. We are therefore back to worshipping online through Zoom. Our attendance remains strong, in the low to high fifties. We have one new attender I hope will be taking instruction soon. Bible study attendance is strong, with attendance on Wednesdays in the twenties.

The mission has expanded our budget to support Emilie Prozenko staying with us as a full-time deaconess in the fall. It will be a stretch, but with the support of FORO partners, especially the SELC District, we pray we can make this a reality. Emilie will continue to be in front of our immigrant outreach, especially our English classes, our internet outreach, children's ministry, and some visitation. English classes this winter will include help from Concordia-Nebraska's ESL training program. Our total attendance has been in the thirties for our beginner and advanced classes.

This month I also taught a two-week intensive course for the Canadian Lutheran seminary in St. Catharines. Six students met with me online for ten three and a half hour classes on "science and theology." There is some thought that this course could be used at our seminary in the Dominican Republic.

Work Down South

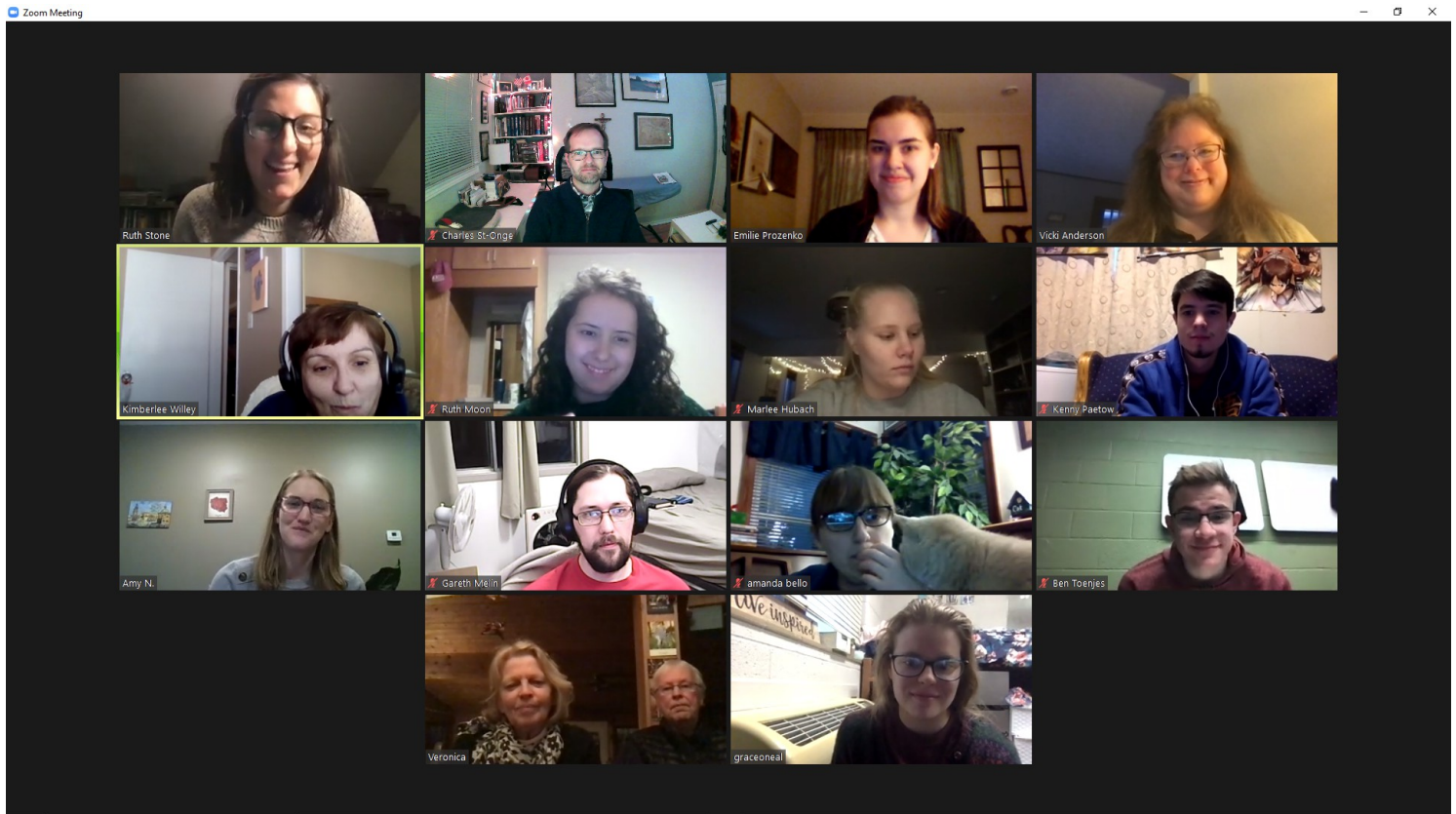
While I'm not "traveling" to the south, I am still actively involved in the work across the Caribbean. I participate in weekly team meetings for Puerto Rico and meet with each team member regularly. Puerto Rico is using the COVID downtime to restructure some of its facilities. They are also exploring a children's outreach through the zoo in Mayaguez. We are thankful for the support of St. John, Newhall, IA in underwriting the Jamaican school's work in the coming year. Pastor Ite and the school's work continue even under challenging conditions. Lastly, Pastor Gerald Paul and his wife Heidi are in the Dominican Republic for orientation. They will be arriving in the Caymans, Lord willing, the first weekend in March.



A Picture's Worth of Words

Right: Bible study on Epiphany Day, January 6. We are blessed to bring together not only members at Ascension, but also participants from Nova Scotia, Manitoba, British Columbia, Illinois, Ohio and the Cayman Islands.

Below: A group of volunteers assemble for orientation. These folks from all across the US and from Quebec will be helping in our English Outreach program for winter 2021. Across the top, starting from left, are Ruth Stone (Montreal lay volunteer), Pastor Charles, Emilie Prozenko, and Dr. Vicki Anderson of Concordia-Nebraska, who leads the ESL program there.



Prayer Concerns

For our immigrant and internet outreach work, the Gospel seeds that are planted might become a large harvest;

For our work in the Caribbean, that during this time of pandemic and change our missionaries might not lose heart;

For those alone during this time, that the Lord would provide them comfort and joy;

For my uncles Herb and Ray, both recovering at home, that the Lord would grant them healing.

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