

## Transitioning to Montreal Full-Time

This month a "memorandum of understanding" was signed between the SELC District, the Synod's Office of National Mission, and me. This is a key part of a transition that will see me taking on mission work in Montreal full-time. The process is a little strange. A lot of paperwork, new support structures, budgets, and funds are being established that will enable us, basically, stay where we are and keep doing what we're doing.

This transition will mean leaving the Office of International Mission after nine years of service. It will also mean leaving my work as Area Facilitator for Puerto Rico, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands after seven and a half years of labour. In that time we expanded our work in Jamaica and added a ministry centre; we went through a long vacancy in the Cayman Islands and the calling of a new missionary; I oversaw Puerto Rico during a period of two major hurricanes (Irma and Maria) and a series of major earthquakes, as I saw three pastors and several missionaries come and go from that field.

**Over the next few weeks those of you who are regular supporters of our work should be contacted by someone from Synod's Mission Advancement department.** They will be asking if you want to continue your support of our work in Montreal, and will ask for your permission to transition that support to our new Office of National Mission account. We hope you will say "yes" and help us continue this work!

## New Member at Ascension

We are grieving the loss of a number of members at Ascension (see "Mission Moment.") At the same time, our outreach open houses and English classes continue apace, we began a junior confirmation class with four students, and we received a Persian immigrant into membership this month. He became a baptized Christian at a WELS congregation in Ottawa. His son, who is still nominally a Muslim, attended his reception into membership with him. His son even struck up a conversation with a young pre-seminary student who was visiting us while on a field trip in Montreal. Pray for us as we add "Persian" to the list of languages spoken in our congregation!

## Mission Moment

It is always uplifting and encouraging to see the obviously positive ways that the Lord is working through us in accomplishing the mission of Christ. We love seeing pictures of baptisms, confirmations, and growing congregations in Christ.

But missions is also about remaining faithful and motivated in seasons of discouragement. The worst of the COVID pandemic is behind us in Quebec, and worship services are as close to "normal" as they've been since March 2020. But things are not really as they were before. Many who used to attend in person have switched to online. Regular faces have joined the church triumphant: five of our most committed members have fallen asleep in Christ since the pandemic started. With travel restrictions lifting, other new members have moved to new (and less French) cities in Canada. One new member did not have her visa renewed, and had to return to her home country.

Yet the Lord always works through his Word. We pray for the encouragement of the Helper-Spirit to keep us focused on Jesus and His Gospel, in season and out.



## A Picture's Worth of Words



**Top left:** Deaconess Emilie and I are excited to be able to make home visits again. This is Ellen Botto, one of our ninety-year-old Slovak members. **Bottom left:** Outgoing SELC Mission Exec Paul Hoyer and I sign the memorandum of understanding with the Office of National Mission. **Top right:** With Deaconess Emilie and congregational President Jason Huang at our triennial SELC District Convention in St. Louis. **Bottom right:** Deaconess Emilie and I attended a regional update conference sponsored by Waybase, a group helping Christian ministries serve their neighbourhoods and support each other. On the far right is Pierrefonds-Roxboro borough mayor Jim Beis who also addressed the group.

## Prayer Concerns

For non-French speakers in Quebec who are grappling with the passage of Bill 96, severely restricting where and how non-French speakers can be addressed in their mother tongues, including during medical appointments, expanding the number of businesses that must operate in French only, and limiting enrollment at English language colleges,

For our family, as we transition to the Office of National Mission and full-time mission work in Montreal, and as we leave behind many friends in the Caribbean and in Latin America.

## Support this Work

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