

In The Way

November 2020



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Back Up North!

What a joy to meet with so many of you last month and this month on my 28 day reconnect tour. I had the chance to make 39 visits and presentations, and met with hundreds of people in 11 US states. What a challenge for someone who struggles with names! There were challenges along the way – thanks to Pastor Rob Jarvis and the Paulson family, whom the Lord sent in just the right time, for getting the flat tire changed on the rental on a cold Sunday morning!

There were heartaches as well. I would have stayed with longtime friends the Chapas in Azle, TX, but George ended up in the hospital and succumbed to an infection while I was on my way home. My deepest sympathies are with Cynthia, just as their sympathies were with our family a year ago when my dad was called home to Christ. Thanks to Pastor Steve and the Thomases for stepping in to help.

A few words of thanks are in order. First, to Old Missionary Gary and the saints at Mission Central for their support not just of us but of mission work everywhere. They were able to add several tens of thousands to Pastor Obot Ite's account in response to my plea for help for that dear brother's work. As always, a great visit and a great meal in Mapleton, Iowa where the weather was windy but not cold.

Thanks also to those who provided great snacks and meals: the Lauritsens, the Ballases, the Herbs, the Castors, the Martins, the Kirbys, the Paulsons, Pastor David and Mikhaela Keating, the Emshoffs, the Hosches (a drive-through fundraiser spaghetti dinner! Genius!), the staff at CV Outreach, the Roths, the Lehrmans, the Smiths, the Salazars, the Webbers, the Coulters, the Lambersons, Janice Tackett, the Bosters and the Georges. And to those who not only fed but also housed me overnight, including Ann and Mike Smith, the Thomases, the Tobecks, the Beasleys, and the Douthwaites. If I forgot anyone, my apologies!

I was blessed to present and preach at Redeemer, Sidney, OH, Bethlehem, Annandale, MN and Hosanna, Buffalo, MN (thank you, Pastor Jarvis!), at Grace, Elgin, TX (thank you, Pastor Roth!), at Memorial Lutheran School (thanks to Pastor Paul and to ALL our friends who are too countless to name), and Grace, Clarksville, TN. I also presented at Peace, Cincinnati (thank you Pastor Rodencal!), St. Mark, Conroe, TX, and several times at Memorial, Houston (thanks to my faithful team there: the Hoepners and the Geigels especially, but many, MANY more).

One last thing of which I'm fairly sure: I returned COVID-free. Thanks be to God!

Mission Moment

"Remorse is eating away at me. I ask God for forgiveness, but all I can think of is the wrong I've done. I'm praying not only for myself but also for many others who are in the same boat as me. I asked to confess to a priest, but he refused me. I've repented, but how do I know I've been forgiven?" (translated from the French).

Too many Christians would not be able to give a solid answer to this question. But our Small Catechism hits it straight on. This is why God has given us the gift of absolution: that through a human voice we might hear God himself declare our sins forgiven for the sake and by the command of Jesus Christ.

This was one of our first French emails received in October when we expanded our internet outreach into the main language of Quebec. It will also be the first person to ask to come to a service, and to meet me face to face, which I'll be doing next weekend. As this responder wrote, there are many others out there in the same boat. This season of Advent, we reach out with the light of Christ into the darkness.



A Picture's Worth of Reconnect



Clockwise from Top Left: Supporters at Memorial, Houston; visiting CV Outreach; Rev. Ken and Lois Ballas, who served in Montreal in the 1960s; at Mission Central; Deb, Olivia and Sophia join a presentation by Zoom.

Prayer Concerns

For strength to not loss heart or grow weary of doing good during this time of pandemic,

For those grieving, especially Cynthia Chapa, Marty Thomas, and all who have lost spouses or parents this year,

For my uncles Herb and Ray, both in hospital, one with a serious infection and the other recovering from a heart attack,

For those we reach out to each week in our mission, that the light of Christ might illuminate their minds and hearts.

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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