

In The Way

February 2021

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Work Up North

Quebec remains the only region in North America with an 8 PM to 5 AM curfew every night. Our stores are open again, though, as are our malls. Restaurants and bars are still closed, but cinemas will open again for our March Break. Churches are still at the 10-person limit imposed in January but I expect that will open up again in a couple of weeks to at least 25. A pan-Christian movement is asking the Quebec government to open up to 30% sanctuary capacity in time for Easter.

All of these reopenings are hampered by a very, very slow vaccine delivery process. The United States is currently vaccinating more people per day than Canada has vaccinated in total. That likely means that most of Europe and the US will have herd immunity by the late summer, while Canada will still be struggling with closures and curfews.

Yet the mission goes on. English classes twice a week, online mid-week services, online "Kids Club" twice a month, three Sunday services so that the Lord's Supper is available to all who come, and many emails to those suffering. Ascension will meet March 7 to extend a call to our deaconess intern to serve with us full-time for at least two years. Our FORO partners will meet with our mission team March 13 to support this work.

Emilie and the Stone family are also working on a twice-monthly young(er) adult group fellowship and study activity. And we are all praying we can make "online" the exception rather than the rule someday soon!

Work Down South

Although it is unlikely I will be working down south in the flesh anytime soon, I am still helping our teams across the Caribbean carry out and expand their work. Our school in Jamaica is still running, as are our two mission congregations. Disaster response and church planting work in Puerto Rico continues. Two of our missionaries there, Ruth Maita and Ashley Lehr, were extended and have accepted full-time mission positions this month. Pastor Gerald Paul will be arriving in the Caymans March 6, Lord willing, and I will install him "virtually" on March 21, as no non-essential travel is permitted into the islands at this time.

This month was also our regional team meeting. Normally we meet in person every January. This time it was, of course, via Zoom. Budgets and plans for the next year were discussed, and we all listened to the work the Lord is doing across the Latin America and Caribbean region.

Mission Moment

Sometimes mission moves quickly. There are a couple of individuals in the last while who have come to Ascension, loved what they've heard, took instruction and joined the congregation – just like that!

Other times mission is slow. There are those who come to us through email or through our doors that want to explore the faith and take their time. It can take a year or two before they are ready to confess faith in Christ and join us at the Lord's Table.

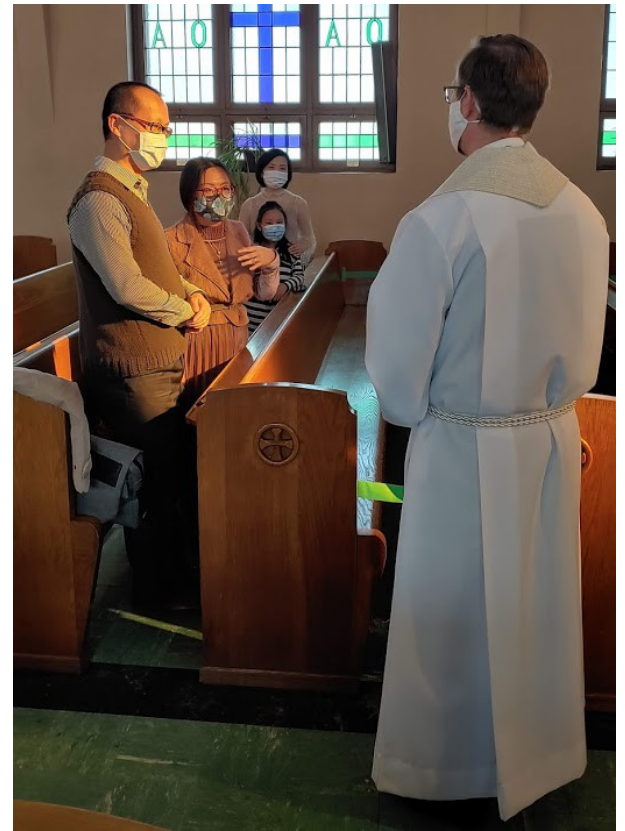
In still other situations, missions can seem glacial. After years of sporadic emails back and forth, I had my first video call with a man exploring the Lutheran faith. He has not yet attended worship with us – but that is in the Lord's hands.

Fast, slow or tortoise-like, mission is always about planting seed, looking for growth, and then harvesting. Like a good farmer, we have to have patience: the same patience our Lord has with us. As Peter writes in his second epistle, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)



A Picture's Worth of Reconnect

Clockwise from Right: With some of our Chinese members for the 2 PM service on February 14, Transfiguration Sunday. Students at our beginners' English class. ESL students from Concordia-Nebraska are helping us this term. Deb leading "Kids' Club," which includes an LCMS family in the Virgin Islands we have been serving this year. We are exploring a mission congregation there, post-pandemic.



Prayer Concerns

- For Gerald, Ashley, and Ruth, and all missionaries transitioning during this challenging time,
- For those in our Montreal church family in hospital or recovering, especially Olive, Carrie, Kathryn and Masih,
- For my uncle Herb recovering at home from surgery,
- For Deb, who is struggling again with vision problems, that she might find a way to get treatment soon.

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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