

In The Way

March 2021

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Work Up North

Thanks be to Daylight Savings Time! Our curfew is now only from 9:30 PM to 5 AM. Places of worship can again have up to 50% capacity just in time for Holy Week. That means this week I'm leading online services every evening at 7 PM, in addition to in-person services on Thursday afternoon, Good Friday morning (still a holiday in Canada!), and of course Easter morning. No singing in person, so Deb has played a number of hymns on our new organ with me, Emilie, Avery and teh girls singing, with special live music for Easter.

Like last year, we'll be having an international, online Easter Vigil. Our District President, Wally Vinovskis, will be participating, as will my fellow area facilitators Rev. Herb Burch and Rev. Arthur Rickman, our Cayman Islands missionary Rev. Dr. Gerald Paul, and our new associate director Rev. Jonah Burakowski.

Backing up a little, on March 7 we held a special voters' meeting where we extended a call to Emilie Stoller, our deaconess intern, to serve with us full time starting in the Fall. She'll be supported in part by Ascension, in part by the SELC District, and in part by our other Montreal FORO partners. We had a special FORO meeting on Saturday, March 13 to encourage our partners to support her work. Emilie and I will be speaking to the English District mission board in April about what she's doing in Montreal.

Monday, March 15 I also participated in an online mission panel for the Graduate Christian Fellowship of McGill University. We continue to pursue ministry opportunities on the campuses of our large city universities.

Work Down South

It was my privilege to install Pastor Gerald Paul as pastor at Safe Harbour Lutheran Church in the Caymans via Zoom on Sunday, March 21. We had over 80 in attendance at our online service from Montreal and the Cayman Islands, as well as guests from Germany and South Africa.

We have also completed over three years of disaster response work in Puerto Rico. We're now looking ahead to what the next two years might hold. We are close to identifying a third missionary pastor for the island. Two of our short-term missionaries are becoming full-time this year and, with them needing to do mission support and with our current team needing some rest, planning for furloughs and vacations was this month's logistical challenge.

Mission Moment

Here are just a handful of the dozens and dozens of outreach emails Emilie (in English) and I (in French) have answered this month:

"I would like to know the prayer of the blessed prophet Jesus and how he fasted and kept Lent. What spiritual exercises should I be doing?" (from a Muslim seeker).

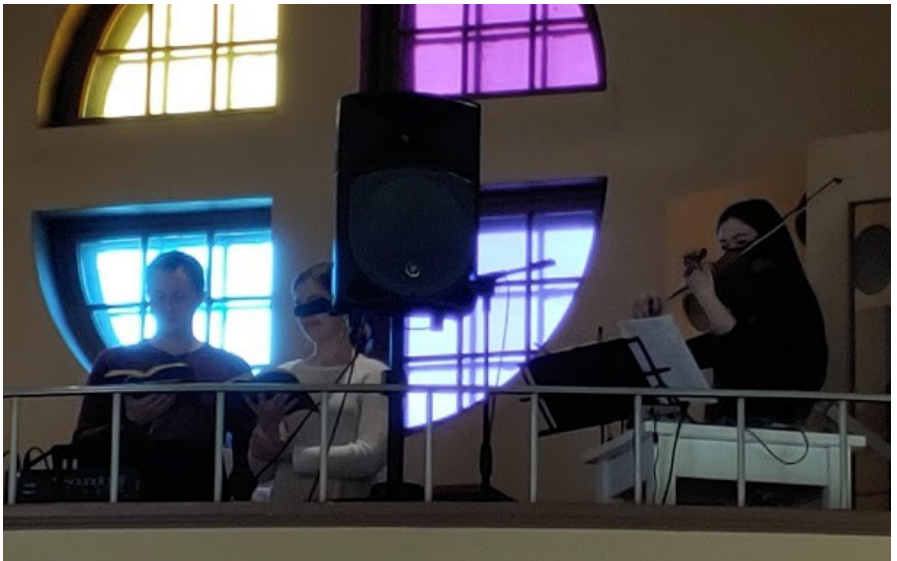
"I was so faithful before then I had depression and no matter how I prayed I don't feel God which made me ask whether depression is more powerful than God."

"I started reading the Bible last year. I also read the books 'The Case for Christ' and 'When Faith Fails.' Deep down I want to believe, but I still have so many questions about the life of Jesus such as how did he perform the miracles." (from a nearby seeker. She's listening to my sermons this week on the evidence for Jesus. Emilie, our intern, is setting up a time to meet).

Holy Week is a busy time when we often receive double our usual number of emails. Pray that we have the words to respond well, and that people have "eyes to read" what we write.



A Picture's Worth of Words



Clockwise from Top Right: School signs in French, English and Hindi across the street from Ascension; Our March FORO Meeting online; Practicing Easter music; installing Pastor Gerald Paul with Pastor Ted Krey and former interims the Alters; preparing Easter bags to go out to members and not-yet-members of Ascension.

Prayer Concerns

For Gerald, Ashley, and Ruth, and all missionaries transitioning during this challenging time,

For all of us as we continue to weather the impacts of COVID-19, especially those who have lost loved ones to the disease,

For pastors and people as they journey with Jesus through this Holy Week to Easter,

For Deb, who has now found some new doctors who are planning new treatments to assist with her vision.

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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