

In The Way

October 2021

The St-Onge Family
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Work Up North

Most of you have heard about our English as another language outreach, one of our main works of mercy in our community. Deaconess Emilie Stoller teaches beginners on Tuesday evenings while a lay volunteer, Ruth Stone, leads an advanced conversational English class on Thursdays. In just one week this fall Ascension had students from Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Niger, Japan, Pakistan and Columbia. We are intentionally showing our care for people in the name of Christ.

But where Christ is at work, Satan is also busy. The government of Quebec is working to pass a new law, Bill 96, that would make it illegal to teach English to new immigrants to Quebec. Deaconess Emilie and Pastor Charles' wife Deborah would not be allowed to request any services – including medical services – in English. This would, of course, be a violation of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That charter, however, can be bypassed by provinces through use of a "notwithstanding clause" in the constitution. No federal party will risk attacking the law for fear of losing votes in Quebec. All of this is being done in the interests of preserving Quebec's identity and culture from foreign influences. As the Quebec premier wrote this week, "national cohesion is very precious and must be cultivated from childhood. We must pass on to our youth more knowledge about our history, our culture, and the functioning of Quebec society." Left unsaid was the belief that that history cannot be passed on in English.

In these challenging times, it is good to remember the Good News that our identity does not rest in our place of birth, our heritage, or even our language (John 1:12-13). It rests in the Word of God, who has made us children of our heavenly Father by the Spirit who has given us faith in His name. We are strangers in every land, yet wherever the Gospel is proclaimed – in whatever tongue – we are also at home.

Work Down South

This month I've been organizing a location for our Puerto Rico team conference in February, starting the strategic planning process for the islands of the south, and participating in our regular meetings. This weekend I will be "down south" in Kentucky, where I will be at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Shelbyville, KY on Sunday morning October 31, and preaching for the Louisville Circuit Reformation service at 3 PM in the afternoon. Our team in Puerto Rico has been short two pastors and two workers this month. Deaconess Christel and Pastor James Neuendorf are on network reconnect, and Pastor Gustavo and Ruth Maita are at home with their new son, Isaiah!

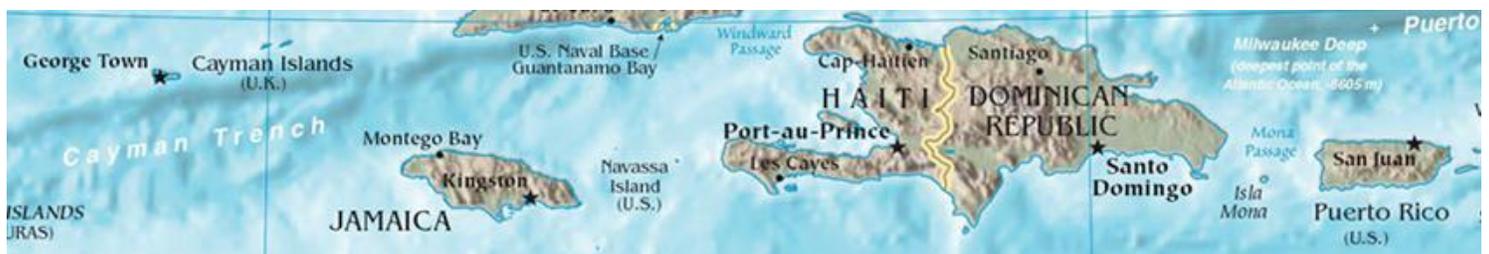
Mission Moment

Last week I joined our beginners' English class at Ascension. We had not had "in person" classes for over a year and a half due to COVID and it was good to see new people face to face (if not mask to mask).

I was paired up with a Sikh gentleman by the name of Gurwinder, a truck driver who works in a neighbourhood adjacent to ours. As we practiced introducing each other, and shared where we were from and what our work was, I told him I was a pastor. What do you suppose was his response?

"That is a very, very hard job," is what he said.

I wish we had had more time to explore further. But I was surprised that the one thing a Sikh knew about being in ministry was that it was often difficult! Is that the first thing you think of when you hear that someone is a pastor? How would you have responded?



A Picture's Worth of Words



Top left: Confirming two adult members on Thanksgiving Sunday (Oct 10). **Top right:** March in downtown Montreal in protection of the French language. **Bottom left:** Our Kids Club students and teachers, in person and online. **Bottom right:** Installation of our former associate pastor, Rev. Marco Antonio Jacobsen, in Quebec City. He is now a French missionary with the Lutheran Church – Canada.

Prayer Concerns

For Donald Follstaedt, Deborah's father, who is recovering from a broken hip and an infection at home in Ohio,

For Ruth Stone's father Rev. Mark Kloha, who is also recovering from an infection at home in Kentucky,

For the mission of the Lutheran Church – Canada in spreading the Gospel in Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

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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