

The Messenger



IN HIS TIMING

Story by LCMS Missionary Pastor James Neuendorf, who serves in Ponce, Puerto Rico with his wife, Deaconess Christel.

We had our first in-person worship service in the reopening on **Pentecost Sunday**. We met in the outdoor patio of our earthquake damaged buildings rather than the much smaller rented location where we could barely seat 10 people under the strict social distancing requirements. Because of our position on the globe, Puerto Rican summers are hot, and Ponce is the hottest part of the island; but fortunately, our usual 3 p.m. service time just happens to perfectly coincide with the ideal angle of the sun for casting shade over our patio. Like clockwork, we set up the altar and sound system under a blazing sun, and the cool shade swept over the impromptu sanctuary right at 3:00. Having recently spent a lot of my free time being fascinated by precise orbital mechanics because of the recent SpaceX launch, the timing of it all really struck me. So much of what we are doing lately seems like we are making it up as we go, yet God was always a step ahead.



The shade came from a quenepa tree that was probably planted when the historic house that is now our mercy center was built, perhaps 100 years ago. A church member reminded me that they were dealing with their own pandemic in Ponce back then. This type of tree is a symbol of the city, and every year there is a festival to celebrate the harvest of the delicious quenepa fruit, (you may know it as the Spanish lime.) The seedling of that tree made many trips around our sun before it was ready to provide that perfectly timed shade.

It was not only the position of the sun on the horizon, however, but of the earth around the sun. Pentecost Sunday is the day we celebrate the church emerging from its enclosure in the upper room and spreading into the whole world. We celebrate the beginning of a new era, the harvest that comes with God's perfect timing. God had waited patiently since the time of creation for the right moment to pour out His Spirit on mankind again, to begin the harvest season of the righteousness of His Son. The seed planted at the dawn of the world had grown and put out its leaves to bear fruit, patiently marching its way to the day of the Lord.

In my sermon, to those gathered under the shade of that tree, I pointed out the implication in Joel's prophecy which is cited in Acts, that the "Last Days" begin at Pentecost. I directed their attention to the crumbling towers and rubble all around us and asked, "Is this what the end of days looks like?" Perhaps we are all so concerned with determining the times and knowing if this is the end of the world, that we have forgotten what the "end" means to our Lord. It means that the long-awaited fruits of the tree planted long ago are ripe. It means it is time for the harvest! I directed their attention to the quenepa tree above them, filled with the tiny beginnings of thousands of fruits, (they will be ready to pick in August).

This is what Pentecost means, this is what God's timing brings, and this is where we are at in our long trip around the sun. Our little congregation has re-emerged after months of lockdown. In the midst of the ruins of our city, you can see the little buds and shoots of new relationships, of interest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ for sinners, everywhere. We don't know what is next, it's hurricane season now, but all time is God's time, and He has declared it harvest time.

*Missionary Pastor
James Neuendorf and
his wife, Deaconess
Christel
Photo by Johanna
Heidorn*





Jump on board to help spread God's love.
Our next LWML meeting will be Tuesday,
May 18 at 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.
Serving in Missions



Mission Grant 21 of \$39,523

LCMS Deaconess Ministry - LCMS Office of International Mission

Students in South Africa

Students in Philippines with resources purchased by LWML

LCMS Deaconesses are women who are full time professional church workers, trained to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through a ministry of works of mercy, spiritual care, and teaching the Christian faith. The LCMS Deaconess Ministry program provides LCMS students the opportunity to become a church professional, learning and training to understand the diaconal leadership, the work of deaconesses as applied to body and soul ministry. This grant will provide educational and financial support to our partner churches who introduced deaconess training programs within their church bodies like the Philippines, Latvia, Liberia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and India.

LCMS Deaconess Ministry works both domestically and internationally to form women who are theologically trained to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through acts of mercy, spiritual care and teaching the Christian faith. The delegates gathered at the 2019 Lutheran Women's Missionary League Convention in Mobile, Alabama, voted the sum of \$90,000 to help fund LCMS Deaconess Ministry.



The ladies of St. Paul LWML created a bouquet of Tootsie Pop flowers after our April meeting. Each flower contained a short positive Bible verse.

Ms. Johnson, the director of Preschool Plus, was very touched with our gift for staff members.

During the month of May, we will continue to collect 0 to 12 month-old size baby BOY clothes for First Choice Women's Medical Center Montgomery. With your help St. Paul can fill the boy box in the Welcome Center. Many thanks!

TOWN HALL MEETING

Sunday, May 23 after
10:30 service

The Montgomery Area Food Bank needs volunteers. Interested people can take a tour to find out more. For more information call Teresa Millwood at 334-245-7284



Feeding Hope
Across
Alabama

VOTERS' MEETING

Sunday, June 13 after the 10:30 service



Save your 'stuff.' The Youth are planning a yard sale this summer. Keep an eye out of more information about bringing items for the sale.



Sweet Sadie Owens passed away on Friday, April 16th. Please keep Sadie's family in your thoughts and prayers.

Join Pastor Elam on
1st & 3rd Fridays at 7:00 a.m.
for Bible study and breakfast.

Meet at the Farmer's Market Café (315 N. McDonough St.).
For more information contact Pastor Elam.



LADIES BIBLE STUDY will not meet in May, June, July and August for summer break. We look forward to resuming in September. Have a wonderful and safe summer.

ST. PAUL APRIL 2021 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Contributions\$27,732.52 (\$4,399.19 over Budget for the month)
 Monthly Budget.....\$23,333.33

Quarterly - January through March

Contributions\$67,517.42
 Quarterly budget\$70,000.03 (\$2,482.61 under Budget for the quarter)



May..... Renee Perry
 JuneJoan Nightengale
 JulyTerry Elam

Gunnhild Grant	5/16	Beau Smith	6/6
Carrie Paxton	5/16	Baylor Bozeman	6/8
Rebecca Culver	5/26	Florence Smith	6/8
Larry Maevers	5/27	Lori Cabaniss	6/9
Bunnie Dunn	6/3	Dick Vaughn	6/10
Evelyn Oswald	6/6	Brooks Wilson	6/12



<i>Ron & Kajuana Hill</i>	<i>5/17</i>	<i>Kurt & Cindy Hetler</i>	<i>6/4</i>
<i>Mike & Janet Nisbet</i>	<i>5/17</i>	<i>Russ & Diana Kirklin</i>	<i>6/11</i>
<i>Crowell & Gayle Lisenby</i>	<i>5/21</i>	<i>Matthew & Alicia Boarts</i>	<i>6/14</i>
<i>Brandon & Brittany Richardson</i>	<i>5/28</i>		
<i>Dewey & Gwen Landers</i>	<i>6/2</i>		

Please submit pictures/information for the newsletter by the 12th of each month to dhoward@knology.net.

PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

To activate the prayer chain, contact the church office at 272-6214.