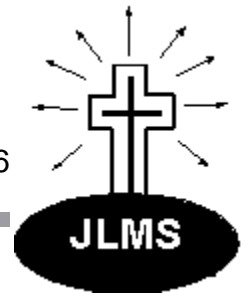


The Jamaica Journal

VOLUME 16 No. 2

MARCH 2006



Details of the Transition in Jamaica

by Rev. Patrick O'Neal

As you read in the January issue of the Jamaica Journal, the mission here is in a time of transition as the LCMS missionaries prepare to leave Jamaica at the end of May. Many of you have asked for more specific information on what is happening here and how this transition will affect the ministry in Jamaica.

Ongoing LCMS World Mission Partnership: It should be reiterated that the departure of the American missionaries does not mean the closing of this mission field. LCMS World mission remains committed to continuing the partnership with the Lutherans in Jamaica. Rev. Jorge Groh, Regional Director will still have a field budget for the work in Jamaica. The Regional Theological Education by Extension Area Facilitator will be assisting with ongoing training and evangelism workshops.

International Partnership: A discussion has been opened with the Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN) on the possibility of a Nigerian missionary being sent to work alongside the Jamaican church. The LCN is waiting for an official request from the church here, a decision that the church council has begun to work through. LCMS World Mission stands ready to financially support the potential Nigerian missionary in an innovative partnership that will make the best use of the resources (financial and personnel) both church bodies can offer.



Bath Mountain Medical Clinic and Outreach

Center: On Monday, February 27, the Jamaican church leadership decided that they would assume responsibility for the operation of the Medical Clinic and Outreach Center in Bath Mountain. This project had been supported through grants from LCMS World Relief, Wheat Ridge

Ministries, our mission budget, and many volunteer teams who labored to rehabilitate the structure. The clinic can be financially self-supporting by having a doctor only once per month and utilizing the nurse on the other three clinic days. Mr. Claudious Dell, the

evangelist working in Bath Mountain, has been able to secure part-time employment. This will allow him to meet his own financial needs with 2-3 days of work per week, leaving the rest of the time free for evangelism and running the clinic. Under Jamaican leadership, this project is on course to achieve the original goal of long-term sustainability. Mr. Dell reports that 15 adults and 10 children are gathering on Sundays for worship at the clinic site, and he is working with the youth on Friday nights. A community committee has also formed and they see a vital role for the Clinic in their community./FONT>

Kingston Building Project: The departure of the missionaries does not mean the end of the Kingston Ministry Center Building Project. Lutheran Ministries in Jamaica (the incorporated body of the LCMS in Jamaica) still owns the land and will continue to hold it so that the church can build when finally given the government's approval. The money that has been donated and set aside for building will remain for that purpose and will be dispersed when the church is ready to build. The main difference in the Building Project will be that the Jamaicans themselves will fully oversee it. It will be up to the Jamaican Lutherans to determine how they want to proceed. LCMS World Mission, and I'm sure many individuals and supporting congregations, stand ready to assist as they are requested to do so by the Jamaican Lutheran church.

Vacation Bible School: The Jamaican Church Leadership also has decided to move ahead with two of the scheduled Vacation Bible Schools. They plan to host LCMS volunteer teams for VBS in Bath Mountain and also in Kingston. They decided not to hold VBS in Portmore this year simply because they are facing so many challenges and they did not want to over commit themselves. After this summer, they will evaluate the situation for next year. LCMS World Mission is already discussing how future volunteer teams can be effectively coordinated to work in Jamaica. The missionaries will work to ensure that there is a local contact person who will handle the coordination with LCMS World Mission.



Volunteer Service in Jamaica: There are plenty of opportunities for volunteer service in Jamaica to assist this emerging church in their work. The key will be coordinating these efforts so that they do not conflict with one another, work at cross-purposes with what the church is trying to do, or become a burden on the Jamaican Lutherans. As the local church identifies needs, they will share these with LCMS World Mission and then the recruitment and logistic details of teams can be handled from St. Louis. Together much can be achieved.

Lutheran Hour and Media Ministries: Mr. Patrick Jones has been coordinating the Lutheran Hour radio broadcast and media outreach supported by direct gifts from individuals and congregations. The departure of the missionaries does not change that, so his work can continue. If you would like to support this vital media ministry, checks can be made out to “Jamaica Lutheran Mission Society,” marked on the memo line “Jamaica Lutheran Hour” and sent to: Randy Gardner, JLMS Treasurer, 72863 Road 428, Arapahoe, NE 68922-2228.

Calling a Local Pastor: Long before this transition was set into motion, the mission had the goal of St. Andrew Lutheran Church operating under its own pastoral leadership. For many months I have led discussions and Bible Studies dealing with the pastoral office, the relationship between pastor and congregation, the role of women in the church, call procedures, etc. On Sunday March 5, the congregation will meet to discuss possible local pastoral candidates. There are men who have been engaged in theological education over the years under the various missionaries who have served here. The congregation will be able to call their own pastor from within this ministry. While this will not be without some stress and challenges, and ongoing training will be necessary, we do believe that it will be the best for the congregation in the long run. It will mean that they will have genuine ownership of the ministry here and will be one step closer to being the independent Lutheran Church that was envisioned in the original Mission Strategy.



I pray that these details help you to understand what is happening in this transition and what’s in store for the future of the work in Jamaica. Please continue to pray for the church in Jamaica and continue to support the ongoing work with your gifts through the Jamaica Lutheran Mission Society or LCMS World Mission.

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YOU CAN HELP!

by Amy Lesemann

Would you like to encourage the congregations of St. Andrew in Kingston and Portmore as they make this transition to local leadership and the absence of American missionaries? We would love it if you would shower them with your prayers and at the same time shower them with cards and letters to encourage them and let them know you are praying for them and are confident God will bless them and take care of them. Please send them starting now so that they will be arriving before we are leaving in May. And feel free to continue to send them encouragement after we are gone. It would be great for them to have a tangible way to feel the support of the body of Christ as they take this big step.

Men's Fellowship

by Mr. J. Patrick Jones

Men's Fellowship had its fundraiser on Sunday, 12th February, 2006. It was called "A Musical Evening". It was a program packed with music, poems, acting, storytelling, juggling, and a Karaoke competition. We took a donation of J\$100.00 (\$1.50 US) per person. Most of the men took part in the program along with some youths and missionaries. We had about eighteen items on the program, which was chaired by Rev. Patrick O'Neal. We had three prizes for the Karaoke competition, which were donated by three members of our Men's Fellowship. These members are Dr. Keith Turner, Mr. Christian Raebel and Rev. Bruce Lesemann. At the end of the Karaoke our three judges, Mrs. Jennifer O'Neal, Mrs. Amy Lesemann and Morris Ellington, voted Mr. Noel Williams for first prize and Mr. Claudious Dell and Mr. Patrick Jones tied for second place. All those who attended the program said that they enjoyed it and are looking forward for us to put on the same type of program in the future.

Women's Ministry

by Ancella Gregory

On 10th December 2000, twenty (20) ladies, not all members of St. Andrew Lutheran Church congregation, combined their efforts to exercise the vision of Mrs. Carla Kirby to begin a Women's Fellowship at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Jamaica.

We are still going strong today, meeting every second Saturday of each month, doing a mixture of service, educational, social and developmental themes that are planned for our upcoming meetings. On February 13th, 2006 for the first time we made contact with the St. John's Lutheran Women's Fellowship, Champaign, Illinois, by video conference. Although there were some technical difficulties which we still have to figure out, it was a success. St. John's has officially become our "Sister Fellowship." This was made possible by the efforts of Mrs. Jennifer O'Neal, and we pray that by corresponding we can exchange ideas that the good news will go out even further. On that same evening we had a cooking demonstration where the ladies showed different types of dishes that they

know. Mrs. O'Neal, Ms. Gregory, Mrs. Haino, and Mrs. Turner did Biscotti cookies, Salt Fish Fritters, Tuna Macaroni Salad and Open Sandwiches respectively.

SALCWF (St. Andrew Lutheran Church Women's Fellowship) has come a long way and we have grown stronger and more connected through our fellowship with each other. I pray that we will continue to share our talents and love with each other and especially with those who do not know the Lord.

Help us pray that the Holy Spirit will lay upon our hearts the things to do that will glorify the Lord, for we are only servants of the Lord.

Riggins Report

by Jim & Joan Riggins

On Friday night, February 24, Patrick Jones, my wife and I along with 10 members of the high school youth group went down to the Logos II floating Christian Bookstore. It was a very "cozy" ride in the taxi van. The bookstore was docked at the Rockfort Cement Company in southeast Kingston from February 11 – March 12. They had many programs planned while in Kingston. Patrick, Joan and I signed up for a Pastors' and Leaders' workshop for March 7th. We all had a chance to look at the many, many books and CDs that were available for purchase. Some of the students made purchases with the money they brought. The highlight of the evening was the God's Gift of Skills program. God has given us amazing skills and this was displayed by various youth groups and the Logos staff. There were a number of skits. One of the skits was a modern day version of the Prodigal Son. If you were not paying close attention you would have missed some of the funny lines and actions. There was also a very energetic and enthusiastic dancing group and a group that led us in singing praises to God. It was a very enjoyable and uplifting evening. Since coming down in September it has been a real pleasure working with Patrick Jones and the high school youth group.

Property News

by Rev. Bruce & Amy Lesemann

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18

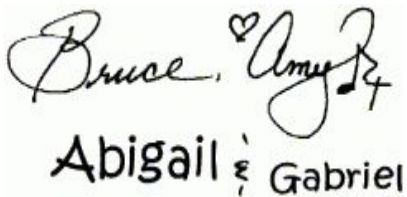
One thing you can say about life in Jamaica: it is always interesting! When I heard the news, the conversation went something like this, "When? How? Who?" "In broad daylight???...What next?" That's what went through my mind and out my mouth a few weeks ago when we found out that the gates had been stolen off the property. A kind neighbor witnessed a big truck coming to the property on a Thursday. She called the police but the gate thieves got away. We must be living in desperate times in Jamaica for

as I called around to find out information about getting the gates replaced, I found out that we weren't the only ones to have our gates stolen.

You've known from our past newsletters that one thing after another has been troubling us with this property, and yet we still have hope! Until we know that God is leading us elsewhere we're fixing our eyes on the idea that it is His will that a Lutheran Church is to be built on this property, whether the missionaries are here or not.

Please pray for the congregation as they look to the future and at possibly setting up a temporary worship structure (a tent) on the property to worship. Pray that the Lord would make His will clear as to how they should proceed with the building project once the American missionaries are gone.

In His grace,



Bruce, Amy
Abigail & Gabriel

Lutheran Ministries Prayer Requests for January 2006

Please pray with us...

1. ...for the health of our missionary staff. Pray especially for the missionary kids: John, Grace, James, Abigail and Gabriel, that they would be at peace and feel secure during this time of change.
2. ...for Eunice Florip, the Lesemann's, the O'Neal's and the Riggins, as they search God's will as to where to serve Him next. Pray for unity of mind and spirit as they struggle to accomplish all that is needed to make this transition work over the next few months.
3. ...for peace in Jamaica. Pray that God would strengthen His followers in Jamaica for the task of sharing His love on the island to bring true peace to this land.
4. ...in thanks for the future partner church that will be working with St. Andrew Lutheran Church. The process is in place and the partner church is interested.

Pray that God would bless this partnership.

5. ...for strength and patience for St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Kingston and Portmore as they come to grips with all the changes this transition will entail. Pray that God would bless the change to complete local leadership and use it to His glory.
6. ...for peace and wisdom in dealing with continuing difficulties with the property since the gates have been stolen.
7. ...for the lay preachers as they struggle with the desires and needs of the congregations they serve.
8. ...for the St. Andrew Church Council as they will be doing double duty as we meet more often to deal with the transition of LMJ.
9. ...in thanks to God for Ancella Gregory and Claudious Dell and their many years of faithful service. Please pray for them as they seek new employment once their positions with LMJ are ended and pray that they would find new ways to glorify Him.



Volunteer Update

by Eunice Florip

Greetings from Jamaica,

March has come and we are still enjoying cool "Christmas breezes". The walls of the houses along the streets are draped with bougainvillea bushes in riotous colors, the blooms almost obscuring the leaves. The pooiu trees have had their short time of brilliant yellow covering every inch of the tree. Along the south coast we are experiencing dry weather. It is a wonderful time to be in Jamaica. It will be hard to leave here, but I know that the "Thy will be done" which I pray often, is at work. God's plan will continue to go forward here, and He will also lead me.

And so it was nice in February to have a special day that was the culmination of months of preparation. In August 2005, a VBS team came from St. John's Lutheran Church, Marysville, Ohio. On that team was a librarian, Ellen Gee. She saw the school library where the VBS met, and also the public library in Portmore. She realized that the libraries do not have many books. When she returned home she organized a gathering of used books and sent them to Jamaica. The books arrived in December and on February 15, 2006 several of our members, myself and Pastor

Lesemann and Abigail attended a book presentation ceremony at the Jamaica Library Services Headquarters. The Director General of the Services is Bruce Lesemann's neighbor (we knew she worked at the library but didn't know her position) and she was delighted to know that it was her neighbor who was part of the Lutheran Ministries, the donor of the books. The Director General spoke, then Ancella, our secretary, and Patrick our media coordinator told about the books and our ministry. The staff of the services came out of their offices to join us. It was a nice day.



I am enjoying the time I spend teaching Abigail and we are learning about the stars, evaporation and the use of ramps, along with math, writing and stories from the Bible. After we have school, I also spend time with both Abigail and Gabriel in play. It is also fun to go to the O'Neals and play with John, Grace and James. What a joy it has been to watch these children grow over the past years. God is so good.

Please continue to keep all of us in your prayers. We know that God is with us each day and we pray that you feel His hand of blessing in all that you do.

The picture is of the Kids in Christ group I work with, working on a manger scene picture. Sometimes we have 12 come, other times, only the few, but they like the stories and activities we do.

Please consider a gift in support of the Jamaica Lutheran Hour.

With the departure of the missionaries at the end of May, the Jamaica Lutheran Hour is essential for continuing the Lutheran Church in Jamaica. If you would like to support this vital media ministry, checks can be made out to Jamaica Lutheran Mission Society, marked on the memo line Jamaica Lutheran Hour and sent to:

Randy Gardner, JLMS Treasurer, 72863 Road 428, Arapahoe NE 68922-2228.

Contacting Your Missionaries

Web Site <http://www.cptln.org/jamaica/>

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Rev. Bruce and Amy Lesemann (missionaries)
Eunice Florip (volunteer missionary)
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