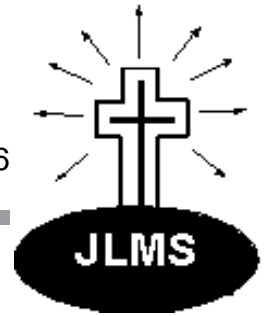


The Jamaica Journal

VOLUME 16 No. 3

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“We Will Soldier On!”

by Rev. Patrick O’Neal

LCMS World Mission Regional Director Rev. Jorge Groh, and Area Facilitator Rev. Dale Talsma were in Jamaica May 5-8 to encourage and assist the members of St. Andrew Lutheran Church as the departure of the missionaries fast approaches at the end of this month. Meeting for an hour with the members of the congregation and in an all afternoon session with the church council, the plans and strategies for the coming months were discussed and agreed upon. It was exciting to hear the people voice their strong trust in the Lord and their determination that this ministry continue. Chairman of the Council, Millie Moodie, expressed her thanks for the missionaries, past and present, and said, “We will soldier on!” In the spirit of Ablaze! the council members expressed their vision for ministry as building the foundation in Kingston and then expanding to other places, sharing the love of Christ with people. Pastor Talsma was pleased to see the leadership focused not on what they are losing, but on how they will work together and within their means to continue the ministry.



Pastor Groh shared that LCMS World Mission has committed \$10,000 US from the current fiscal year to be used as seed money to assist the congregation with costs for office and worship space rental. This will augment the budget of St. Andrew to meet these needs for the coming year. Additional money has been budgeted for the coming fiscal year that will cover the salary and benefits for the Nigerian missionary and also be enough to supplement the congregation’s needs.

The congregation is dealing with a significant change in local leadership. After the Good Friday service, I shared the following announcement with the congregation: “... it is with deep sadness that I have to share with you that for personal reasons, Patrick Jones has resigned from all of his positions in the church: [Lutheran Hour] media coordinator, lay

preacher, youth group leader, and council chairman.” It was shared with the congregation that Mr. Jones was asked to resign for reasons that made him unsuitable for the pastoral office and church leadership. His departure was a major set-back for the ministry in Jamaica. But the position description of the missionary being requested from Nigeria has been changed so that his initial primary responsibility will be to meet the pastoral needs of St. Andrew Lutheran Church.

Until the Nigerian missionary arrives it was agreed by all that Pastors Groh and Talsma will arrange for LCMS pastors to come to Jamaica to preach and serve the Lord’s Supper once or twice a month. On the weeks when a pastor is not present, the congregation will still gather for singing, prayer, devotional reading, and Bible study. This will ensure that their corporate life together does not falter. Council Member Dorothy Williams encouraged this saying that even if there were only a few people they should not stop meeting; that just because there is no pastor it doesn’t mean that they should just quit. Amen to that! It was heartening to hear this determination.... that even in the face of challenges, the Lutherans in Jamaica are going to pull together.



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Preaching and Mission Presentation Schedule

by Rev. Patrick O’Neal

Ever wonder what it’s like to be a missionary living in another country? Do you know what languages most people speak in Jamaica? Can you find Seoul?

I’m looking forward to seeing many of you, our supporters, this summer as I have the opportunity to be in 20 locations across 3 states to share the story of what God has been doing in Jamaica and also about the work that my family and I are preparing for in North Asia as we move to Seoul, South Korea in early August.

I hope that you can come to one of the presentations. It will be great to see you! Call the church to confirm the time. For maps go to: <http://www.idwlcms.org/congregations.htm> or check out <http://www.lcms.org/ca/www/locators/nchurches/church.asp>

Date Church/Location, City, State Time

June 3 Trinity, Algona, Iowa 6:00 pm worship

June 4 Trinity, Algona, Iowa 8:00 and 10:30 am worship
9:15 am Bible Class

June 6 Immanuel, Greenfield, IA - pending am

June 6 Emmanuel, Lake View, IA - pending pm

June 7 Mission Central, Mapleton, Iowa 7:00 pm

June 8 Redeemer, Sioux City, IA - pending am

Zion, Pierce, Nebraska 7:00 pm

June 9 Our Savior, Norfolk, Neb. - pending am

St John, Clarinda Iowa 6:30 pm

June 11 Immanuel, Guthrie Center, Iowa 9:00 am worship

St Thomas, Panora, Iowa 10:30 am worship

June 18 Bethany, Long Beach, California 8:00, 9:30, 10:55 am worship

June 25 Peace, Camarillo, California 8 and 10:30 am worship

9:30 am Bible Class

July 1 Mt. Olive, Des Moines, Iowa 6:00 pm worship

July 2 Faith, Adel, Iowa 8:00 & 10:30 worship

9:15 Bible Class

July 3 St John, Garner, Iowa 7:00 pm

July 6 Grace, Correctionville, Iowa 7:00 pm

July 7 Christ, Remsen, Iowa 7:00 pm

July 8 Trinity & Zion, Mallard, Iowa 7:00 pm

July 9 Peace, West Bend, Iowa 8:15 am worship

St. Paul, Emmetsburg, Iowa 10:00 am worship

Reflections

by Rev. Bruce & Amy Lesemann

Can it really be that we've been here almost 4 years? When we arrived, we were committed to at least two, and when we came back from furlough this January, we were committed to two more! Our devotion and love for the Jamaican people has grown over the years, Jamaica has become our home, and the members of St. Andrew's have been knitted into a permanent place in our hearts. We are sad to see our time here end.

Aside from our Jamaican family in Christ, what will we miss about Jamaica? The peanut man, with his roaster whistling, the jerk stalls smoking along the streets, goats and cows walking across or in the city streets, driving on the left side of the road (with the steering

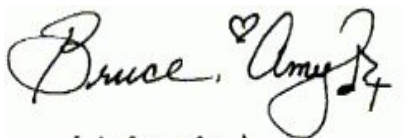
wheel on the right), the mountains, warm weather, the coffee, donkey carts, children pushing handmade trucks made out of juice cartons, Patois, British accents, the sunshine, the cool mornings . . .

What won't we miss? Crazy driving taxis and buses, potholes, the heat, biting ants, mosquitoes, power outages, multiple gates and locks to enter home and office, taxes, governmental red tape, people wanting to wash your windows with dirty rags at stoplights, dogs barking at all hours of the day and night . . .

While we would love to stay here longer, we know that the Lord has other plans for us and for the Jamaican Lutheran Church. As he is able, Bruce will come and help for a weekend or two once in a while, at least until the Nigerian missionary comes. We don't yet know where the Lord is calling us to serve next. We're waiting with open hearts to find out! For now, we'll be spending some time with family and some time in seminary housing in St. Louis. We'll try to let you know when we know where we will serve next.

We'd like to thank you all for your prayers and support these last few years. Some of you have been supporting us even since we were in the Philippines. We are so grateful and know that we could not have served the Lord in this way without your gracious prayer and financial support and encouragement. May the Lord continue to bless your mission hearts!

In His grace,



Abigail & Gabriel

Property News

by Rev. Bruce & Amy Lesemann

The gates have finally been replaced, and after a brief delay for lack of cement, the fence has been repaired (there was an island-wide shortage as some faulty cement had been found and all building halted until the problem could be rectified.). Now the task of clearing the land remains. This is a necessary task for many reasons, and since the land is overgrown so badly we will need to hire a heavy equipment company with a bulldozer and trucks to haul the debris. Bulldozing is expensive enough as it is, but what astonished us was the cost of clearing away the debris. For not one or two truckloads will be needed, but an estimated 30 truckloads! This situation encourages us to look for ways to keep it clean so this doesn't happen again! Before we leave, we hope to set in place a means by

which the congregation will be able to keep the land clear following the bulldozing – in the rainy season there is so much rapid growth that it is almost impossible to keep it clean by hand with machetes, even with congregational clean up days.

You may be wondering what the future holds for this land, and so do we. At present there is no one who has stepped forward to take over the planning, organizing and overseeing of this monumental task. But we know that God has a plan and we and the members of St. Andrew will continue to seek His guidance and step by step this project will continue (or not) according to His will.

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Romans 8:38-39

Lutheran Ministries Prayer Requests for May 2006

1. Praise God for the people of St. Andrew Lutheran Church who are remaining faithful and have determined to see their church continue even in the midst of changes. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill the hearts of the members of the congregation as they gather together for corporate worship, with or without a pastor, so that they might be encouraged in their faith and strengthened by the Word of God.
2. Praise the Lord for the safe travel of Rev. Jorge Groh and Rev. Dale Talsma and for the productive meetings that were held earlier this month. May the Lord give them guidance and wisdom as they continue their supportive role and partnership with the Lutherans in Jamaica and as they facilitate the relationship with the Lutheran Church of Nigeria and the missionary who will be coming to Jamaica.
3. Pray that the Lord will clear the way at the Bath Mountain Clinic for the plans to acquire a water pump and lay pipe from the spring to the clinic, serving not only the clinic but the surrounding community as well. Thank the Lord for the Ministry of LCMS World Relief that is funding this project and also funding the construction of a house for Marcia Williams whose house was badly damaged in an earthquake and landslide. Pray that the construction happens quickly and safely.
4. Pray for Evangelist Claudious Dell in Bath Mountain who is reaching out to the community around him with God's Word. Pray that those he visits with would be receptive to the Gospel, and that the Lord would grant Claudious continued strength for the work and peace during the solitary hours.

5. Pray for guidance for the congregation as they move forward with the Kingston building project. It still needs final approval of the detailed plans. Pray that the Lord gives the members of St. Andrew Lutheran Church wisdom to select the right contractor. Pray that construction can proceed in peace.
6. Pray that our heavenly Father might protect those pastors who will travel to Jamaica to serve the congregation in Kingston for a week or two at a time. May they be kept safe in the air and safe on the ground so that they might join together with the saints assembled in Jamaica singing the praises of our God who provides.
7. Praise God for the visitors that have come to our worship services. Ask the Lord of the harvest to open the eyes of the members of St. Andrew Lutheran Church to see the field that is ripe for harvest. Ask also that their hearts would be set Ablaze! as they hear the Word, that they might share it with others and bring light to those sitting in darkness.
8. Thank the Lord for the safe travel of Jim and Joan Riggins who returned to Cincinnati at the end of April, ... for the safe travel of Jennifer O'Neal & children John, Grace, and James who returned to Des Moines on May 3. ... for the safe travel of Amy Lesemann & children Abigail and Gabriel as they traveled home on May 17. Pray for Eunice Florip, who is flying to Michigan on May 24, and for Patrick O'Neal and Bruce Lesemann as they return to the US by the end of May.
9. Ask that the Lord grant patience and strength to the missionaries in their respective situations, as they go through reverse culture shock, and settle in to the new work the Lord has prepared for them.
10. Lift up the members of the St. Andrew Lutheran Church Council: Millie, Dorothy, Ancella, Jennifer, Donna, Marcia, and Claudious, as they lead the church in the coming year ...that they may remain faithful in their task, hopeful in the Lord, and helpful to one another.
11. Pray for the mission team from Faith Lutheran Church in Adel, Iowa as they prepare to lead VBS at Bath Mountain the third week in July, that the Lord would grant them safe travel and a successful VBS.



Volunteer Update

by Eunice Florip

Greetings from Jamaica,

Four years and ten months have passed since I came to the island of Jamaica to join the Kirby's and teach their children. Since then, I have also taught John and Grace O'Neal and Abigail Lesemann. It's been such a privilege to be a part of these families and I thank God for His love in giving me these experiences. What good memories I will take with me when I leave on May 24!

The times spent with the congregation members has been such a joy, too. There's Nurse Moodie who shows her love in giving advice to us all, church secretary Ancella with so many skills who works tirelessly for the church, Jackie Blair, who learned to play guitar from Amy and leads the worship team on Sunday, Mikhail "Benji" who is going to college, but still takes time help lead the children's club we have had on Sunday, Ms. Stewart who walks to church bringing with her assorted children, some her grandchildren, to worship with us, and Jennifer Williams who brings children with her to church and works many hours on the computer as she is our treasurer. These blessings we will keep in our memories, too.



This month is filled with preparations for our departure. Both Pastors are working hard at getting many details settled, and I try to be available to help as much as I can.

Outside my window a pineapple has begun to grow. It's about the size of a grapefruit right now and so I won't be here long enough to enjoy its fruit. The plant has been here since I have lived here. That's like the church here. It takes a while for it to grow and it finally produced fruit. The pineapple needed God's sun and rain, but Maggie and I also gave it water during the dry times.

Our time of nurturing the church has ended, but the church here will grow and produce fruit with the help of the Lord. We know that after we leave there will be fruit. I ask that you continue to pray for the church and the people here in the months to come.

My plans for the future are still unknown, but they will also grow with the Lord's help. May God bless all of you and help you to continue to keep the ministry here in Jamaica in your prayers and your heart.

In Christ, Eunice Florip

Please consider a gift in support of the Jamaica Mission

As talked about in the cover article, LCMS World Mission has committed to continue to fund outreach and the anticipated Nigerian missionary in Jamaica and will need our support for these expenses. If you would like to continue to support this outreach, make your check payable to LCMS World Mission, note on the memo line Work in Jamaica and send to:

**LCMS World Mission
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis MO 63122-7295**

Contacting Your Missionaries

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

Rev. Patrick and Jennifer O'Neal (missionaries)
Rev. Bruce and Amy Lesemann (missionaries)
Eunice Florip (volunteer missionary)



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