



Together

Newsletter for congregations of the ELCA, from the
Costa Rican Lutheran Church (ILCO)

Number 1/2010

We are very pleased to present you with the first number of our digital newsletter, "Together." We hope that this bulletin will help keep our sister churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America informed about ILCO's life and mission, and that it will strengthen the bonds of friendship among our congregations.

Highlights from the ILCO

- February 27, 2010, marked the seventh anniversary of Casa Abierta (Open House Day Care Center) in Alajuelita. This Center receives children of low-income families, while their parents (usually single mothers) work. Kids in the program are welcomed into a loving environment where they can play, rest, learn, and develop spiritually. Responding to a similar need in the Community of Faith, La Carpio, the ILCO opened its second Casa Abierta in October 2009.
- The Costa Rican Lutheran Church played a visible, active role as a participant in the Central American Congress on HIV/AIDS (CONCASIDA 2010) which took place in San José, March 1-5. ILCO's participation was aimed at working towards a more inclusive church and society. ILCO's own pastoral and HIV teams are grateful for the visit and contribution of Argentinian Pastor Lisandro Orlov, who was on hand to share his insights on working on HIV.
- Thanks to the offering campaign of the Southwestern Texas Synod of ELCA, the Manú Center has undergone some wonderful upgrades. To date, the offering received from ILCO's partner synod in Texas has been devoted to improving the Center's capacity to host visitors comfortably. The open air chapel has also been completed.
- Thanks to the efforts of Pastor Diane Wales, the congregation of San Sebastian received a donation of guitars that contributed to the formation of the community's first guitar group. This initiative will help enhance the community's worship life.
- Young people from the communities of Tejarillos and San Sebastián organized and built the recycling center REVIVE (Reciclaje Vida Verde), as a means of helping to protect the environment. This project was developed with the active support of the Costa Rican Lutheran Church and the Soccer for Life Foundation.
- Kids from the La Carpio community enjoy having new play equipment and table games that were provided through a joint project of the Soccer for Life Foundation and the Embassy of Germany. The equipment is available to children and youth in a "Ludoteca" that functions in ILCO's La Carpio church building.
- The ILCO has started its own Radio Program "Church and Society", a communication venue that provides listeners with information on pressing national and international issues. "Church and Society" seeks to empower ordinary citizens to think critically and take a stance. To date, 31 weekly

programs have been transmitted.

- **ILCO's work on environmental concerns led to a vision of creating an Ecological Sanctuary in the El Jardín Community. The ILCO continues to encourage local church members, neighbors, young people, and children to be actively engaged in caring for God's creation.**
- **ILCO's Faith Community of Diversity elected its first Board of Directors. The newly elected leadership has met to make an annual plan, and looks forward in hope towards a new phase of growth and development of its community.**
- **The Faith Community of Carit in Puriscal, now enjoys the welcome addition of electrical installations in its building. The ILCO thanks its partners from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Coon Rapids, Minnesota, for contributing their labor to this project.**
- **The ILCO is pleased to participate in the Fifth Assembly of the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA and to have Pastor Justo Espinoza and Brenda Rivera represent the ILCO in this important event. We thank God for our relationship with the North Carolina Synod and we look forward to continued growth together. The Assembly will meet in Hickory, NC, June 3-5.**
- **ILCO has launched a campaign to support the children that benefit from the Casa Abierta Day Care Centers. Called, "Let's provide shelter", this fundraising effort invites people to become sponsors of kids in the program. The campaign raises awareness of the work that takes place in the centers, and is open to receiving financial contributions from any group or individuals who want to help provide food, needed equipment, and learning experiences for the children.**

Highlights from Costa Rica

- **Costa Rica registered another milestone in its history when voters overwhelmingly elected a woman to the presidency, through a peaceful process. Laura Chinchilla, a former vice president who campaigned on "honesty and security", obtained 46.7 percent of the vote, surpassing her closest competitor.**
- **Costa Rica adopted a new immigration law that went into effect on March 1, 2010. The new law introduces a new social security registration requirement for residence and work permit applicants, imposes heightened penalties on foreign nationals who remain in Costa Rica beyond their authorized period of stay and significantly increases filing fees for residence applications.**

IN PRAYER- ILCO invites your prayers to God for the following:

- **We rejoice in the good news of the birth of a child to our friends from Coon Rapids, Erick Alvarez and his wife, and pray for God's blessing on their lives.**
- **We pray for the Fifth Assembly of the North Carolina Synod.**
- **We pray for the children of our faith communities who were baptized on Easter Sunday, and remember their parents and sponsors before God.**

Are you interested in receiving more information; please contact

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