



Together

**Newsletter for congregations of the ELCA
from the Costa Rican Lutheran Church**

Number 2/2011

Highlights from our recent ministries

- **Community Carit de Puriscal celebrates the day of water**

The faith community of Betania in Carit de Puriscal, together with their pastor, Gilberto Quesada, celebrated the World Day of Water. This activity was celebrated along with children and youth who took an hour-long walk to visit the area that supplies water to the neighborhood of Carit. They learned about the history of the aqueduct that is used by the community and discussed the critical state of water supplies and cleanliness at the local, national, and world level.

- **Lutheran Ministries from the Universities of Florida and Texas visit Costa Rica**

Youth representing the ministries of the University of Florida (Gators) and University of Texas (Longhorns) spent their spring breaks on a mission trip to Costa Rica where they visited different communities. The student ministries are organizations that look to integrate the youth in relational activities with the Lutheran Faith and exchange experiences with brothers and sisters in Christ. During their time in Costa Rica, the Florida group supported El Descanso, an etnoturistic project in the indigenous territory of Terraba, where people fight to preserve their traditions and natural resources. The Texas group helped maintain and improve the church in Chilamate by applying plaster to the walls.

- **Pastoral meeting at El Jardin Community in Sarapiquí**

A group of pastors together with Bishop Melvin Jiménez visited the community of El Jardín, where they took part in the pastoral process of Pastor Nehemias Rivera. The visit also allowed the Bishop and pastors to visit other chapels in the area in order to monitor the infrastructure.

- **Devotions led by the Committee for Indigenous Rights**

The devotional for April 2011 was organized by the Committee for Indigenous Rights of the Lutheran Church of Costa Rica and was dedicated to the struggle of the indigenous community of Terraba against plans to construct a hydroelectric dam. This time of worship offered a chance to exchange viewpoints and meditate on the situation experienced by the indigenous population.

- **Youth gathering on sexuality**

The Youth program of ILCO held a summit welcoming young people from many different communities to discuss sexuality. The youth had the opportunity to participate in various cooperative discussions, a workshop about the prevention of HIV/AIDS. This activity is part of various intercommunity meetings planned by the Youth program for 2011.

The program coordinator Erick Umana said that, "The objective of these activities is to develop stronger bonds of friendship and facilitate discussions on the important topic of sexuality, responsibility, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

- **Bishop Melvin Jiménez participated in a psychiatry conference with the topic Christian faith and Sexual Diversity**

Bishop Jiménez participated in a psychiatry conference in San Jose, presenting on behalf of human rights for the GLBT community. Many professionals participated in the conference, sharing ideas and proposing changes based on scientific advances and understanding, with the belief that important changes can be made for the health of people and communities.

- **Workshop on Lutheran Identity and church's Mission.**

With the objective to strengthen the brotherly relationship and cooperation between the Swedish and Costa Rican Lutheran churches, three important workshops were attended by representatives from Sweden that offered a chance to reflect on our Lutheran identity, music in church, and a presentation on the diocese in the city of Vaxjo. This encounter between the churches will inspire us to walk together with people who are discriminated against or excluded, and call for help and accompaniment in their struggles for fundamental rights.

- **Pastoral visit to the indigenous community of Guatuso**

The faith community of San Sebastian made a new visit to the indigenous population, Palenque Sol, to continue building relationships. They took part in many activities while there: a break dance class at a local school, a class on making wallets and purses led by German volunteers. Also, a group of women discussed craft techniques and barriers to selling their goods, like transportation, location, and competition, making it difficult to provide a stable income for the families. In this case, the church of San Sebastian was able to purchase some of the goods in order to sell them at church or to sister delegations from the United States or Sweden.

- **Bingo led by children and youth at Puriscal**

The congregation in Betania had a bingo party, organized by a local committee with the help of children and youth. The pastor Gilberto Quesada express that is "our hope that this event will be replicated in other communities of faith".

- **In our Prayers**

We lift our prayers to God for God's comfort and strength for all the families affected by the devastation of the recent tornadoes in the United States. Our hearts go out to them.

God bless you all

**Are you interested in receiving more information? Please contact:
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