

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

2025 was filled with wonderful opportunities for ministry and fellowship. It seemed to have gone by in a blink of an eye. I am excited to share some highlights from the past year with you!

The Lutheran Mission of Puerto Rico missionary team expanded this past year with the addition of Vicar Paul Mroczenki and his family arriving in March and Alliance Missionary Sergio Maita and his family arriving in July. We now have a team of 9 missionaries plus families sharing the Gospel, planting Lutheran churches and showing mercy in Puerto Rico.



At the end of March, with the guidance and help of Deaconess Christel Neuendorf, we taught a workshop on Altar Care and what it means to be part of an Altar Guild. It was a combined event between Iglesia Luterana Príncipe de Paz (Mayaguez) and Iglesia Luterana Fuente de Vida (Ponce). We started with the history of the church gathering as a group of people, to the order of the services, talking about the history of the lectionaries and the liturgy and then all that follows, like the paraments, Holy Communion ware, banners, etc. It was a very full day that ended with two congregations making banners together and creating Altar Guild teams to prepare and maintain the altars in their own congregations. It was a wonderful opportunity to take what I am learning in Deaconess classes and teach the congregations here in Puerto Rico.

One of my big focuses this year was teaching bible studies to children. I started teaching Sunday School for the children at Iglesia Luterana Príncipe de Paz (Mayaguez). This year we learned about the Gospel readings that follow the one-year lectionary. The children heard about the readings in the Divine Service, and we did activities and crafts in class to help understand the readings better. During the week, the kids would constantly ask me what we were going to be doing on Sunday. It was a joy to see them so excited to learn about the stories of the Bible.

I continued teaching and organizing the Latin America and Caribbean region's missionary girl's Bible study, named "Beautiful Inheritance" (Psalm 16). This bible study meets once a month on zoom and includes girls ages 8-14 serving in 5 different countries. This year we studied the names of God in the Old Testament. I look forward to more opportunities in 2026 to lead and grow in my abilities to teach bible studies.



The mission was blessed this year with many short-term teams of volunteers. In the month of January, we had a team from Minnesota. In May we had a group of music students and leaders from Concordia University Nebraska (CUNE). In June we had an individual Abby, shadow Deaconess Christel and Missionary Ruth. And in October we had a group from Texas. These faithful individuals and groups help provide support, services, and encouragement for the mission in Puerto Rico.



On Pentecost Sunday, Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios, the congregation in the San Juan Metro Area (Bayamon) welcomed five new members into their congregation through confirmation.



After months of catechesis the congregation was able to rejoice in hearing these new members confess their faith publicly, and to see the joy and peace that they have in knowing that they have forgiveness, life, and salvation in the name of Jesus. The new member are all very excited to share to share with everyone the reason for the hope the Lord has placed in their lives. With the help of the Lord, we look forward to many more confirmations to come



All 3 congregations across the Island came together to help celebrate the confirmands and Pentecost.



Deaconess Studies Update

My deaconess studies through Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne continue to go well. I have two more quarters of classes and a year long internship left in my program. God willing the internship will be done here in Puerto Rico. I am thankful for the opportunity I have been granted to learn and grow in my ability to serve God's people. I am looking forward to new opportunities to use what I am learning in classes to serve the mission of Puerto Rico in the new year.



PLEASE PRAY:

- For my deaconess studies.
- For Jose Ortega who is studying to be a pastor and God willing will be the first Puerto Rican Lutheran Pastor.
- For new opportunities of outreach to our communities in the new year.
- That God would continue to sustain all His missionaries and church workers.
- That the Lord would lead others, young and old, to hear the good news of Christ crucified for their sins and raised for their justification.

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- The growth of our mission team.
- The many opportunities this past year to share the Gospel, plant Lutheran Churches and show mercy in Puerto Rico.
- The birth and rebirth in baptism of Zachariah Maita the newest Puerto Rico Missionary

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The many congregations and individuals who pray, encourage, and support us in the work we are doing for the Lord in Puerto Rico.



Since September, Pastor Gustavo Maita and I have been meeting monthly with a group of young adults and several church members on the west coast of the Island for bible study and fun activities such as bowling and roller skating. This group is a wonderful opportunity for our congregations because many young adults in Puerto Rico feel disillusioned by church experiences they have had in the past which focused mainly on rules and pressure. Through these young adult gatherings, they are hearing the distinction between the Law and the Gospel, sometimes for the first time. Friends who weren't planning to listen have found themselves introduced to the Good News of Christ's free gift for sinners.



October 2025 marked our second "All Church" or "National" Assembly. This is a time when all three congregations gather in the Word, fellowship, and the business of the church. This year it also coincided with our Fall Foro and a Short-Term Team from St. Paul, Austin, TX! It was an awesome time spent together celebrating the Reformation, learning and growing with one another, and ultimately receiving Christ's gifts together as one church body.



I spent the last half of November and first part of December in the Dominican Republic assisting our Human Care Missionary team with the on boarding of two new missionaries. While I was there, I had the opportunity to participate in their advent activities and enjoy fellowship with my missionary friends that live there.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

It was a wonderful year sustained and guided by our Lord. I am incredibly thankful for your faithful support, prayers, and partnership that allows us to continue our outreach among the people of Puerto Rico. May the Lord continue to bless you and give you peace.



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

You can continue to support my work by giving online to <https://www.lcms.org/lehr> or

A check can be made payable to the LCMS with ASHLEY LEHR in the memo to:
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Adopt me as your missionary by visiting <https://missioncentral.us/lehr/>

A check can be made out to **Mission Central** with "A10899-69467" in the memo and sent to:
Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, IA 51034