

August 2017 Newsletter

The Discipleship Chat

No Greater Love

I am writing (or started) this as I have just come back from spending 5 days in Havana, Cuba. I would describe it as a continuous 5 day classic car show!



Cuba is described as a land of contradictions. A police state, yet we walked the streets, sometimes through quite dark stretches, in peace.

We were blessed to spend Sunday morning (and early afternoon) with Pastor Carlos Rojo and his small house church congregation of St Paul Lutheran, Havana.



There were 20 of us, including 6 youth! Not many years ago, they had to worship with the doors closed; people would walk by and throw stones at the building. Now

they worship with the doors open. And yet, it still takes courage to show up for worship in a communist society like this. I thought of this as I felt honored to be a part of them.

My son Patrick played keyboard on the hymns. The sung parts of the (very beautiful Spanish) liturgy came from the 15 year old laptop computer.



I brought "greetings" on behalf of their brothers and sisters of Ascension Lutheran, East Lansing MI, and Pastor Carlos translated (since it would not have been legal for me to preach.) They read the Scripture lessons in English, in our honor! Two of the Youth read. It was exciting to have been a part of this brave worshipping community, one of only 2 Lutheran congregations in Cuba. They were most appreciative of the supplies that we brought to them (Patrick did get stopped by customs over the one duffle bag that held all the Theological books and CD's, but they eventually let everything through).



We sang 'A Mighty Fortress' and 'How Great Thou Art' in Spanish, among the hymns. I took some video clips of

the portions of the liturgy. And I assisted Pastor Carlos in the distribution of the Lord's Supper. Inside, I hoped that I would be found as brave as these fellow Lutherans, as they stood as beacons of the one true Light to their countrymen.

Again, I would like to thank you for all your contributions to help this congregation. They were truly grateful.

Pastor Dave



Matinee Musicales is coming to Ascension!

Mark your calendars for afternoons of music at 1:00p.m. on the first Wednesday of the months of October 4, November 1, 2017, and February 7, March 7, and April 4, 2018.

Light refreshments follow the program.

The following is from a board member of Matinee Musicales:

Lansing Matinee Musicales is looking forward to coming to Ascension Lutheran Church to have our programs. We invite the members of your church to come to our programs. Our programs have very outstanding performers, they are free and open to the public. We hope this will be a time when the people of our organizations can interact and expand our memberships.

On occasion, we ask for people to become members, and our membership is very affordable. But we don't require people to be members to come to the programs.

Women of Ascension will meet Saturday, August 26, 10am at church. This is one week earlier due to the Labor day weekend. We will be examining our roll in hosting meetings of the Lansing Matinee Musicales and discuss activities for fall and winter. Bring your smiles and ideas.

(From Church Extension Fund)

Laying Bricks

Have you had the opportunity to be part of a Mission Trip? Maybe it was during college to a distant land to construct much needed buildings and share the gospel. Many people I know traveled to the southeast United States to help with the clean-up effort after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Or was it assisting your church Youth Group as they did a "Backyard Mission Trip" helping people in your own neighborhood.

Talking to adults and teenagers returning from those trips is an amazing time to hear great stories. Much to my surprise the focus is less on the work that was accomplished or the people with whom they interacted but on the impact that the people had on them. It didn't matter if the trip was to another country or just around the block, the result was the same. Those giving their time certainly accomplished a great deal by cleaning up debris, building new homes or repairing whatever needed updating. During the work they often interacted with the local people laying bricks to reinforce or build a foundation for a faith in Christ.

But a funny thing happened along the way; the workers were often impacted by the people they encountered. As they taught, they learned. As they befriended, they heard stories from the new friends that helped them grow in faith. Those were the first experiences that were shared as they returned home.

As we settle into our adult lives with the responsibilities of family, 50 hour work weeks and limited vacation it often becomes more difficult to carve out the time to pack up and leave on a mission trip for a week or more. For some a sense of frustration starts to grow as we just can't do the things we have done before. Serving and

making a difference in God's Kingdom doesn't have to be in a far off land.

What are the opportunities jumping up all around us? Serving as a Sunday School Teacher, helping in the nursery, being an usher or gathering a group of friends to help out with yardwork for one of the older members of your church can be just as important as doing the Mission Trip. Don't be too proud to serve in the small places. The little things can make all the difference.

Even if we just can't physically handle the labor anymore, we can still have a huge impact! Take the time to write or update your Will or Revocable Living Trust including a gift to your favorite ministry. That gift may help build the house, clean up the yard and lay the bricks, building the foundation for a new faith in Christ.

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