



EL CAMINO SOLIDARIO

MISSION NEWSLETTER FROM KATE LAWLER AND DAVID

November/December 2005



Welcome to El Camino Solidario!

El Camino Solidario –The Path of Solidarity– is our humble attempt to bring the story of mission in South America — as we are living it on a daily basis — home to people of faith in the United States. We hope that its content will be informative and serve as a small, but useful, bridge to Lutheran communities in South America.

While this newsletter will share some news about our family, its true purpose is to shine a light on the ways women, men and children in the five countries we are serving (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Uruguay) are living lives of faithful witness to the Good News. We hope you enjoy El Camino Solidario and we look forward to your feedback.

During this Christmas Season, please pray for the Lutherans and all of God's people in South America. We ask that the New Year bring hope and newfound energy to the many ministries of solidarity that the Lutheran churches in this region work at year-round.

Living in God's amazing grace

Mailing address:

Kate Lawler and David Wunsch
c/o Iglesia Evangelica Luterana Unida (IELU)
Marcos Sastre 2891
C1417 FYE
Buenos Aires, Argentina, S.A.

E-mail:

kathryn.lawler@elca.org
david.wunsch@elca.org

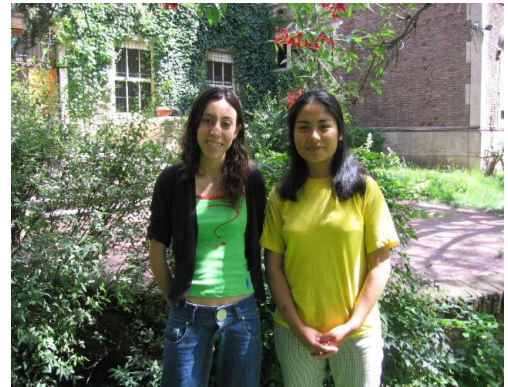
ISEDET: An Ecumenical Space for Theological Study and Pastoral Training

During our first month in Argentina, we had the privilege of living within the lovely courtyard of an ecumenical seminary in Buenos Aires, the Instituto Superior Evangelico de Estudios Teologicos (ISEDET).

ISEDET prepares church leaders from the mainline Protestant denominations with a historical presence in Latin America for ministry. Thus, at its heart, ISEDET embodies ecumenism and is a rich point of convergence for the Protestant family of churches that are products of immigration and/or U.S. and European missionary efforts in years past. The ELCA also supports ISEDET.

One of the richest parts of our stay in the ISEDET community was the opportunity to get to know its students while doing our laundry, chasing the kids around the lawn or playing Sunday night soccer in the parking lot (with a serious contingent of Bolivian Methodist soccer players!)

To give you a feel for the Lutheran students at ISEDET, we wanted to tell you a little about two students in particular (see their picture above right).



Loyda (above right) is 22 years old and came to Argentina three years ago from her native Bolivia. Loyda comes from a family of three generations of Lutherans. Her grandparents became Lutherans through contact with missionaries who came to Bolivia in the late thirties. Loyda dreams of one day returning to her homeland to work with people of all ages in her church.

Laura (above left) grew up in a Catholic family and for most of her childhood attended a Lutheran school that was attached to a Lutheran church in her Buenos Aires neighborhood. One day when she was about 8 years old, she and her father were walking past the church when it suddenly started to rain. They sought shelter in the sanctuary just as service was beginning.

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Her father was so moved by the service that it became the family's church from that day on.

When Laura came to ISEDET to study theology a year ago, she had no idea what to expect. She has been especially struck by the diversity of the student body, both in terms of nationality and confessional identity.

ISEDET has a lot to offer students like Loyda and Laura. The classroom experience is rich. Students describe deepening their own sense of confessional identity through debate and dialogue with classmates from other traditions. Home to the largest collection of Protestant theological works in Latin America, ISEDET also offers excellent research opportunities.

You Can Support ISEDET

The ELCA's Lutheran Foundation offers opportunities to contribute to ISEDET's endowment and support students like Loyda and Laura on an ongoing basis. Gifts in support of ISEDET may be made through the ELCA Foundation for the ISEDET Mission Endowment. Checks should be made payable to the ELCA Foundation, with a clear notation for the ISEDET Mission Endowment and sent to: ELCA Foundation, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4101.

On a Personal Note

We are very thankful to be getting settled into our new home and the kids into their schools. The highlights of Emily's first month of school have been her weekly swimming class and a sleepover at school with her teachers and classmates. Matthew has not dived in quite that quickly but little by little is adjusting to school. Both kids come home with Spanish words swirling around in their heads and usually spend dinnertime asking us what different words mean. It is a lot of fun!

Each Sunday we have been able to visit a different congregation in Greater Buenos Aires and we are starting to get an overview of the diversity of Lutheran congregations here.



Kate, David and two children, Emily & Matthew, both exuding with enthusiastic about mission service!

Thanks For The Commissioning Services!

Before leaving the U.S. we were blessed to be commissioned not once, not twice, but three times. Through commissioning, ELCA congregations are invited to send missionaries to serve God's people around the world with the Gospel of hope and salvation. (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 12: 4-8)

Our first service was in Kenosha, WI, where together with several dozen other new ELCA missionaries, we were commissioned at the close of our three week orientation in July. The commissioning service at our home congregation, Our Saviour's Atonement Lutheran Church in Manhattan took place in September. Our supervisor, Raquel Rodriguez, ELCA Global Mission Desk Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, joined Pastor Barrie Lawless and two NY Metro Synod representatives in a very moving service and farewell.

In October we were commissioned by Pastor Robert Sullivan at St. Paul's -Borcher's, the home congregation of David's parents in Seymour, Indiana. We were joined by Chris Carson and Jean Eisen, members of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod's Global Mission Committee. This synod has a companion synod relationship with Chile. Thank you all for sending us off to live among our companion churches in South America!