



Prayers:

- Please pray earnestly for the negotiations on the building purchase, as well as wisdom for all of the subsequent plans and renovations required.

-Many of the kids from the VBS expressed that they are living through a lot of insecurity and anxiety, pray for the peace that comes from Christ's presence for them, and that the Lord would bring them to our church for baptism and His many gifts.

-Pray for our newly installed congregational council, Luis, Eduardo, and Edwin.

FACEBOOK: @SENDJAMESANDCHRISTEL

The month of June was packed full of exciting developments. At the beginning of the month we celebrated Pentecost with the first ever combined service between the congregation in Mayaguez and the new church plant in Ponce. We packed everyone into a big van and brought them to the other church, and it was a huge hit! I preached at the joint service, and afterwards we had a big fellowship meal. Ponce members were talking about their brothers and sisters in Mayaguez for weeks afterwards. At the service, we also installed our first congregational council, and held our first meeting at the end of the month, this was a critical step for raising up leaders within the church!

Next, back in Ponce, we had our first "Family Day" as a congregation with a treasure hunt, hotdogs, and frisbee in the park. It was a great way to start forming deeper relationships between members of the church! Then we had our special Saturday Bible Class which we do once a month, we had great attendance for a special class on the doctrine of Creation, which fit perfectly with the month of June's Bible Study topic which was the book of Genesis. We were blessed with two waves of volunteer visits, helping the congregation put on a double back to back VBS in the government housing community of Juan Ponce de Leon. We had a good turnout of kids, and despite some hiccups with the bureaucracy, were able to do some wonderful outreach to kids who have been through a lot. The first VBS was the excellent Camp Courage curriculum which was provided by LCMS disaster response for kids who have been through trauma, which led to some good discussions with several of the kids who were going through some difficult things. We were blessed to have the help of a volunteer from St. Paul, Northville Michigan, and several members of Fuente de Vida!

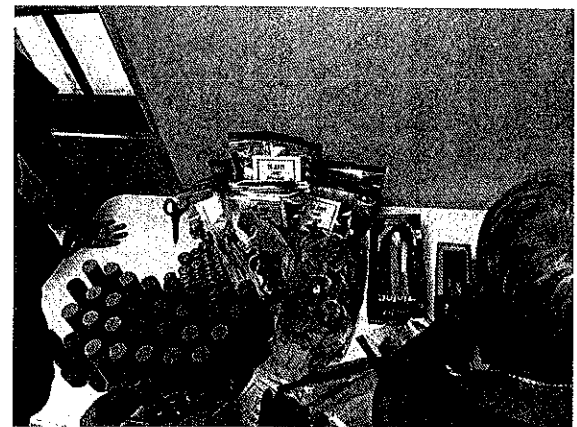
The second VBS was a bit more ambitious, as we wrote our own curriculum, something we called "Project Exodus." The theme was a mad scientist who invented a time machine, through which the kids traveled back to the time of the Exodus and experienced the events first-hand. We made costumes for the kids, props, sets, and wrote over 20 pages of script, and then to make matters even more complex, the three days we had planned needed to be rescheduled down to one crazy day including the events of all three! Congregation members and our volunteers from New Life Community Lutheran made it possible and it was a tremendous, if exhausting, success! We learned that several of our congregation members really enjoy putting on dramas, something we hope to do more of. We are hoping to make follow up visits with some of the families from the VBS in the coming weeks.

We prepared for Hurricane season with a special litany in our service at the beginning of the month, and then at the end of the month we hosted a preparedness workshop. We had representatives from ENDEAVORS Ponce, who we work with on roof projects, and from the Municipality. The congregation prepared bags of supplies to start a disaster preparedness kit for each family, and these bags were distributed at the event. We were blessed with several first-time visitors for the event, and follow ups are ongoing!

I know... we are far beyond our word-count for this newsletter, but there was one more important event in June that we absolutely have to share. Our administrators came down for a visit to see the properties we have been exploring for the building purchase in Ponce, and we took them to 46 different properties, 5 of which were under serious consideration! After a very long day of discussions, ending late at night, we decided to make an offer on an exciting property in an ideal location for our church plant and mercy center. Just a few days before this newsletter, an inspection was conducted, and we are very, very, close to making an offer. Please pray earnestly about this, because God willing, the NEXT newsletter will be all about what's next!



A few photos from VBS. The first week we used Camp Courage from LCMS Disaster Response. The Second week we shared the story of "The Exodus." We thank God for the opportunity to share about Jesus with all of these children and pray for opportunities to follow up!



June 1 was the first day of hurricane season. As our mercy event this month we hosted a disaster preparedness workshop. The municipality gave a talk on how to be prepared and what to do. We had our friend and representative from ENDEAVORS come and share about their social services in getting help from FEMA, and then we closed with a demonstration from a new friend of ours on how to preserve rice.

As a congregation, we put together preparedness bags the Sunday before and advertised the event. Three of the families we have helped with roof repair also came!

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