



THE BRIDGE THAT CONNECTS US
 Newsletter from Milton Castillo
 from Panamá
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Lester Prairie Hits Their Stride

At CALMS we are thrilled when congregations develop strong relationships across the miles.



The Global Team from St. Paul Lutheran, Lester Prairie, MN visited Panama this January for the third year in a row. The primary ministry strategy was to support the children's ministry at "God is Great Lutheran Church" in Loma Cova, Panama.

The relationship has come very far over the three years. As you might expect, everything on the first trip was new and different. The second trip built more trust. Now in the third year, the partnership is really paying dividends. Panamanians remember faces, names, and even particular tastes. The visitors are no longer considered strangers. They are accepted.

Vacation Bible School is an opportunity to reach new families and share the Gospel with little ones. In 2019 the Lutheran of Loma Cova and the Lutherans of Lester Prairie were able to serve shoulder to shoulder and serve a record number of kids – 150! – up from 80 the year before.

Here are 6 wonderful things that God allowed both congregations to do together:

A long trip

From the west to the center of the city and back again.



Every day, for thousands of Panamanians living in the province of Panamá Oeste, the day starts very early in the morning.

It is not many miles from the western suburbs to the center of Panama City but traffic backs up near the big city as it funnels into narrow roads and a dense population. A journey of 20 miles can often take 1 hour 45 minutes to 2 and a half hours in a car or public transport.

The days do not end when you return home because adults must help the children with homework and prepare food for supper or lunch for the next day.

The Psalmist reminds us that it is the Lord who comforts us, even in the middle of long and anxious journeys:

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. -- Psalm 127:2

What a joy to know that our Lord is

- walk in a parade together through the community.
- work together in the planning of the VBS.
- walk together through community to distribute invitations.
- worship God together in the church.
- serve more than 150 children together in the VBS.
- sing praises together at night around a bonfire.

Give us our daily bread

The Global Teams of CALMS support local congregations to feed the hungry with the Gospel and our daily bread.



Urban poverty is often camouflaged among wide roads, tall buildings and impressive infrastructure. If we are not attentive to those around us, we will probably miss the opportunity to know who is in need of daily bread. Let us pray that the Lord opens our eyes to those who need and compassion with whom we can share daily bread.

our support even in the midst of strenuous toil, long hours, and physical & emotional fatigue!

Let us raise a prayer to the Lord to give patience to those with long commutes and weighty responsibilities. May they renew their strength and take up their daily tasks with joy!

Pray that the Lord will be known, adored, and praised by many not only in the growing, western suburbs of Panama City, but in all corners of the country.



Let's pray for the congregation "God is Great" so they continue to be energized for sharing the love of Jesus Christ and the power of his Gospel in their community.

Pray for the CALMS team and the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Panama (IELPA) with whom we partner so that we can continue witness, disciple, and serve in Central America.