



Together

**Newsletter for congregations of the ELCA
from the Costa Rican Lutheran Church**

Number 1/2011

We are very pleased to present you a new number of our newsletter, "Together", hoping that it may serve our sister churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to be better informed about the life and mission of the Costa Rican Lutheran Church.

Highlights from our recent ministries

- **Graduation of women's handicrafts group from La Carpio.**

In the framework of the visit of Faith Lutheran delegation from Minnesota to the Costa Rican Lutheran Church, a graduation was held for a group of women from La Carpio, who participated in handicrafts workshops throughout 2010. They expressed their enthusiasm and joy in this space, which gave them an opportunity to learn or improve their artisan skills. La Carpio is an urban area with many difficulties to overcome, but also with a great potential of their population.

Mission Trips visit Costa Rican Lutheran Church

During January and March 2011, the Lutheran Church of Costa Rica had the honor of receiving delegations from congregations and Campus Ministries of the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)**. These groups visited different congregations, partnered with the communities, and participated in work projects.

Holy Trinity from North Carolina worked at Manu Center Lodge, Faith Lutheran from Minnesota at the Community of Chilamate, Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Florida helped the indigenous project El Descanso in Terraba to preserve their culture and sustainability and Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Texas worked in Chilamate.

- **Computer classes to Day Cares "Casa Abierta"**

Computer classes are given to children at the Open House Day cares in Alajuelita and La Carpio. These classes are given by volunteers from Germany who came to Costa Rica for one year and participating in different activities of the Costa Rican Lutheran Church. These youth work in the nursery and help with things like homework, english, and computers workshops for children.

- **Representatives of the ELCA visit the Community of El Jardín**

The community of el Jardin and San Julian had the privilege to receive a delegation from the ELCA. The delegation was accompanied by Steven Deal, the ELCA representative to Central America, and Grettel Gamboa, coordinator of Diaconia from ILCO. The purpose of the visit was to assess the work that has occurred around the Agroecological Center in this region of Sarapiquí. The visitors talked with an agriculture group, with representatives of the school, and with the president of the association of the community.

Also the activities took place at the community of San Julian, where they partnered with youth and college student. They visited yuca and turmeric fields, where this local sustainable project began. Since 2009, the Agricultural Education program has monitored the training process at the School en El Jardin and the high school of Jan Julian in Sarapiquí, sharing knowledge and attitudes about the protection of nature.

- **ILCO´s youth representatives travel with Swedish exchange program**

Mercedes Vargas Obregon and Aaron Vargas are participating in a Swedish youth exchange program "Youth in the world church. They will be stay in Sweden for three months, participating in youth leadership programs.

This is a program for the Swedish church along with churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The participants have the opportunity to visit different congregations and participating in activities like leadership, environment, Fair Trade etc. This exchange program helps the youth acquire understanding and knowledge about global issues of justice.

- **Learning the difficult task of separating waste.**

The congregation of Carit de Puriscal has been working with children and youth in different activities aimed to protect nature and environment, one of these gatherings is aimed of teaching how to separate waste. The boys and girls come each Saturday and bring their trash. When they bring trash, they receive a pencil, but more than the gift, we are interested in the learning and the steps taken to heal the world. We see our houses and neighborhoods free of waste, which is taken to a collection center run by a group of local women.

- **Devotions. International Women´s Day**

ILCO´s Women Commission was responsible for this month´s devotional for March 2011. They used this occasion to celebrate the International Day of Women, which more than a celebration, has been a chance to reflect and remember the struggle of women for their fundamental rights and for their development as equal people and citizens. Despite some achievements in their struggle for equality, even today, they continue to be victims of discrimination and violence.

- **Welcome Ana Langerak as a new pastor at Alajuelita community of faith.**

The pastoral committee along with other members of the community of faith welcomed pastor Ana Langerak who will be celebrating the liturgy in the community of Alajuelita. Ana Langerak will be the coordinating pastor for the community during 2011.

- **In our Prayers**

We welcome and pray for the baby boy, Gabriel Isaac Ramirez Giron, who was baptized on February 13, 2011 by Pastor Katarina Hedqvist. Gabriel´s godfather is Pastor Gilberto Quesada and his godmother is Ms. Katia Castro. Many people were present for the celebration, including the baby´s grandmother Marta Giron and grandfather Pastor Steven Deal.

Special thanks to De Nae Van Westrienen for her contribution to this newsletter.

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