



NEW YEAR NEW OPPORTUNITIES – JANUARY IN PUERTO RICO

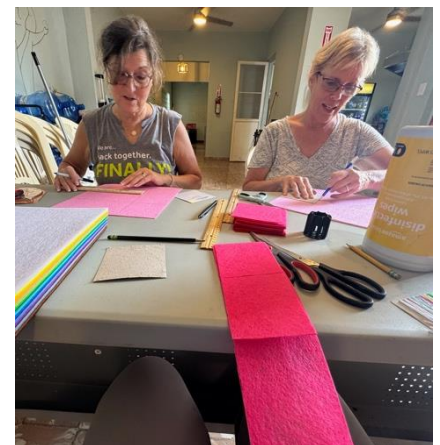
Christmas celebrations in Puerto Rico continue through January 6th - Epiphany and Three Kings Days. Three Kings Day celebrates the journey of the wiseman bringing gifts to Jesus. In Sunday school on January 4th, we learned all about the story of the wiseman from Matthew Chapter 2 by making our own map of the journey.



The following evening on the eve of Epiphany the Maita family hosted the last Christmas meal of the season. We enjoyed a time of fellowship and singing hymns together as a family in Christ.

On the first Sunday of the year, we had two new visitors at Iglesia Luterana Príncipe de Paz (Mayaguez). They have now started catechism classes on Sundays after church. The classes are joined by all the members of the church as a wonderful opportunity to continue learning and growing in faith.

On Tuesday, January 13th, we welcomed a short-term team of volunteers from St. John's Lutheran Church in rural Columbus Nebraska. They served in a variety of different ways from improvement projects at Iglesia Luterana Fuente de Vida in Ponce, to helping with a cookie workshop at Iglesia Luterana Príncipe de Paz in Mayaguez to ending their time in Puerto Rico by participating in the Puerto Rico March for Life. We are thankful for this wonderful group of volunteers who came to serve and learn about the Lutheran Mission of Puerto Rico, and we look forward to a growing partnership in sharing the Gospel.



In December, Iglesia Luterana Príncipe de Paz (Mayaguez), hosted a pasteles making workshop. A pastel is a traditional Puerto Rican Christmas food. It is a yucca and green banana blend dough, with a stewed pork inside. It is then wrapped in a banana leaf, boiled, then removed from the leaf and eaten with rice with guandules, pork, and pasta salad. We realized though as much as everyone LOVES pasteles and it's at the heart of Christmas culture here, many people haven't made them. This gave us the opportunity and idea to have a workshop on how to make them and of course enjoy them after. The workshop began with a prayer and devotional time that led into the true mechanics of the pastel. It ended with wonderful fellowship and the meeting and reuniting of friends of the community.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Safe travels to Fort Wayne, Indiana at the end of January for Deaconess's classes.*
- *The catechism classes of Axviel and Paola and all the other catechumens starting classes around the Island.*
- *The follow up and the connections being made with the visitors from the cookie workshop.*
- *New opportunities to support life in Puerto Rico.*
- *The new opportunities for church planting opening in other cities in Puerto Rico.*
- *My fellow deaconess students as they study alongside of me.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *The short-term team of volunteers from Nebraska.*
- *A wonderful March for Life in Puerto Rico and the new contacts we made during the march with other groups.*
- *The baptism of Sofia Ortega Luna.*
- *The confirmation of faith for Lucy.*

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- *The many congregations and individuals who pray, encourage, and support us in the work we doing are for the Lord in Puerto Rico.*



One of the ladies that attended our pasteles workshop owns a bakery and offered to lead a workshop on cookie baking and decorating. This came to fruition on Saturday January 17th, where over 75 people came to our Valentine's day cookie decorating workshop. It was a blessing to welcome many new visitors to our church and to be able to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them. The event was fruitful in provided us with new contacts of members of our community and new opportunities for the future.



The weekend of January 17th, our Puerto Rico Lutherans 4 Life group hosted a life weekend at Iglesia Luterana Cordero de Dios (Bayamón). The event started on Saturday with a presentation from the Student's for Life president from the local University followed by a presentation about the importance of family by Pastor Sergio Maita. The day ended with a group craft making a banner to hang in the church that shows the value of life. On Sunday, Pastor Adam Lehman taught a bible study on the holiness of Life. The weekend cumulated on Monday with the participating in the March for Life in Puerto Rico in front of the Capital in Old San Juan. It was the first time for our entire group participating in a march for life. It was a great week of learning and advocating for life in Puerto Rico. Our group is excited to continue hosting events this year that emphasize our Gospel motivated approach to life topics.



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at [lcms.org/service](https://www.lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."

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