

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings from Cuernavaca! Belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Andrea and I finally have a chance to catch our breath and send you a letter, now that the holiday season has come to a close. Needless to say, we hope this finds each of you well in this New Year.

As for the family, we are doing well. We spent the entire holiday season (Thanksgiving through New Year's) with houseguests. We enjoyed Andrea's family time over Thanksgiving, and my family over Christmas. All of our guests, friends and family alike, enjoyed their time with Olivia, yet it seems like they could easily have spent many more days with her.

As 2011 becomes a memory, and 2012 takes off, I wanted to take a moment to thank you all for your support over the past year. Andrea, Olivia, and I appreciate all of the ways in which you have offered us support.

ELCA Global Mission has been particularly supportive over the past two months, following a robbery. As some of you may know, our house was broken into on November 2, when we celebrate the Day of the Dead here in Mexico. Thankfully, all of us are fine. We did lose a fair amount of cash and household items, including ELCA-owned property, but nothing that could not be replaced.

After a process of discernment, Andrea and I decided that we needed to move, and we did so the day before Thanksgiving. There was a lot to be thankful for: a new house and a home full of family and friends!

The new house is really the big news for us over the past few months. Andrea's ministry with the volunteers continues to go well. The volunteers have had one retreat, and celebrated Christmas together as a group on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Andrea is planning a retreat for January with a focus on immigration, as a precursor to the Border Immersion trip scheduled for February, when we'll all travel to Arizona for four days of experiential education. We'll learn about the life along the U.S.-Mexico border, and current immigration processes and legislation.

This trip is one of the highlights for us (and usually for the volunteers, as well) each year. We always enjoy and appreciate the challenges that confront us as we dig into the complicated topic of immigration in the U.S. As we prepare for this journey in the desert, please remember us, and all who live the border reality every day, in your prayers.

My ministry with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Mexico City has been busy. I have been serving as a solo associate pastor for about two full months now. The holiday season was, of course, full of activities. The congregation hosted a Thanksgiving dinner in November and a traditional Posada mid-December. We hosted a Christmas Eve worship service and were open for "business" the following morning on Christmas Day. The holiday festivities ended on New Year's Day with a worship service and surprise potluck! What a way to welcome the New Year!

I have enjoyed serving the congregation and being part of their transition. It is my hope that by the end of the year, the congregation will have called a new pastor. This would be a big step, as it would mean that the congregation is able to develop and deepen the stewardship of its gifts, define the characteristics it would like in a pastor, and then successfully call one. This is my hope for the congregation in 2012, and in the same breath, I ask for your prayers, as this is no small thing happening at the church! Please

remember Good Shepherd in your prayers as we seek to discern where God might take this congregation in the coming months and years.



That's all for now. Thank you so much for reading and keeping up with us. Thanks again for all of your varied support for us as a family, and as pastors serving in Mexico. Keep in touch; it is always good to hear from friends, family, and sponsoring congregations! May 2012 be full of joy, peace, and love for you and yours.

In God's Peace,

Luke