



**GOING MULTI-MEDIA!**



We had a chance to be on the radio here in Uruguay! We were the featured guests on an ongoing series about immigrants in Uruguay. It was a little nerve-wracking having our Spanish challenged by the hosts who *\*talkedveryveryfast\** but I think we did okay. They asked us questions about why we came to Uruguay, what we like about Uruguay, what we miss about the United States, our favorite music and food, and lots of other things. I really enjoyed it! It was also a great opportunity to tell people about our church and missions here – many people in Uruguay have no idea that there is a “Lutheran church” so it was good publicity. I wouldn’t mind having a radio show—especially since they let us pick the music!



## Growing as we help others grow



On the left; signs at the airport in Bolivia are in Spanish, English, and Quechua, one of the major indigenous languages; on the right, as Area Facilitator, I had the privilege of installing Rev. Osmel Soliz as missionary pastor in Peru. Rev. Dwayne Lueck, president of the North Wisconsin District, looks on. The North Wisconsin District is a Foro Partner of Peru.

We recently hit our fourth anniversary in the field. It is hard to believe how quickly the time has gone. In some ways, it feels like we just got here. In most ways, though, we definitely have the feeling like we are home and we know what we are doing. Trips that used to demand a GPS no longer do. I haven’t gotten lost going to the airport in a long time. We know where to go to get what we need. An experienced missionary told us before we came that “there will be days when you should just be happy if you can accomplish one thing” and there were probably a few days where we couldn’t even pull that off. Writing in Spanish is no longer a mind-bending exercise, just something we do naturally. We are becoming more and more efficient and effective at our work.

We showed this off at our last Foro; partners and bosses and friends of the Uruguayan church were impressed by the work going on here and told us so. It was nice to get positive reinforcement! We also are being given more responsibility—something we couldn’t have done when we got here.

One of the ways our work has been recognized is a new position. I (James) am now one of the four Area Facilitators for our Latin America & Caribbean region. As Area Facilitator, I am part of the leadership of the region, and I also have a special function to be the first line of help for missionaries in the field. I also serve as a point of contact for the sister churches and missions in my area of responsibility – Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, and Peru. This involves some more travel and lots of Internet meetings and texts and emails, but I am happy to use my experience to help new missionaries and our sister churches in their work.

I’m also happy that the workers we are training and the experience we have gained make it possible to assume this new responsibility without negatively impacting our current work. This is a sign of growth, both in us as church workers and in the mission team, professional and volunteer, that is growing in Uruguay.

# Reaching the people of Montevideo



Angie and the staff of Lutheran Hour Ministries worked together for another successful “Junior Chef” outreach event.

I love to tell you about the great work Angie is doing to help the Lutheran Church of Uruguay connect with people of all ages. We have had such wonderful success getting to know people and getting into a position to share the Gospel with them.

Angie, being a teacher, especially works with children—or works by training people to work with children. Her activities are an important part of the mission strategy for the church here. It is great to see how the congregation in Prado, for example, now has a large corps of Sunday School teachers who are equipped to prepare their own lessons, to teach while engaging the kids and controlling their classrooms, applying Law and Gospel, showing their students the Savior. Seeing these people who were shy or unsure teaching the young people with confidence in their abilities is very rewarding.

Angie also teaches English in various places and to various types of people. We use English to make relationships with people who might normally not want anything to do with the Church.

Of course, we aren’t in Uruguay to convert people to English speakers, we are in Uruguay to convert people to Christianity! So we try to be in-

tentional in moving people from studying English—or participating in any of our other personal growth classes or fellowship activities—to Bible study and catechesis. One “bridge” we started was an \*English\* Bible study for English learners. We help people with their pronunciation, reading comprehension, etc., by studying the Bible. Our first English Bible Study was five weeks long and focused on the Life of Jesus. We had a few people from the church and a couple of people from English class, including a man who had never been to any church before. It’s great when they don’t just ask questions about English, but also about Jesus. It’s great to hear somebody who considers himself an atheist talking about Jesus and what happened in his life not as a fairy tale but as historical facts. That isn’t faith but it is an important step! Our hope is to continue this and also to move people from English Bible study to Spanish Bible study and then catechesis and church membership. Our English-based outreach is also helping us make contacts with immigrants, especially Venezuelans, many of whom are very well-educated and want to improve their English.

Pray for these activities that try to reach out of the church to people who don’t know Jesus or have been separated from the church. Pray that the friendships and relationships we make will allow us to be good witnesses of Christ and invite people into a saving relationship with Him.



An activity during “Sea Odysseys” Bible School in Prado.



We work together with the Lutheran Hour and school staffs to bring unchurched kids and families to opportunities to hear the Gospel.



Kids from the church and school communities received “A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories” (in Spanish, of course) courtesy of Lutheran Heritage Foundation at a special event for Day of the Child.

# Mission Updates

## City Mission

As the weather warmed up, our winter soup distribution came to an end. Over three months, we distributed thousands of cups of soup to people in the area around the mission, most of whom are homeless or semi-homeless. We had the chance to share the Gospel with hundreds of people who had never heard it before, and many people visited the mission and joined us for Bible Study or worship. We continue to follow up with the contacts we made and hope that some of the people who are attending regularly will next move into catechesis to become members of the church.

Every single cup of soup that was distributed was made from scratch by members of the church, and the ingredients all came from donations from members and friends. I was very proud of how the mission congregation responded to this and it makes me very hopeful in the potential of the congregation to reach out, grow, and accept responsibility for stewardship of the ministry. We plan on doing it again this coming winter.

We completed the first full year of personal growth classes. We had a celebration potluck dinner with the students in the various classes. It was

attended by almost 50 people from 6 different countries. Everyone brought something typical of their country – I brought pulled pork barbecue.

We continue to make inroads and connections with immigrants from Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, especially. Pray that this outreach continues to bear fruit.

We continue to search for a permanent home for the mission that would enable us to expand our work and that would be a more suitable place for worship with room to grow. We are looking diligently but haven't found anything that is better than where we currently are. Please keep praying for this; it is one of the most important challenges we face for the long-term success of the outreach in the city.

## Chapicuy

The foundation is in place and the containers have been installed which will serve as the backbone for the new building in Chapicuy. We are going through some more permitting – we got electricity and water hooked up! – and hope to start the next phase of the construction soon. Pray for good weather and smooth bureaucracy so that the work can continue on schedule.

## Prado

The main congregation in Prado is growing in attendance and discipleship. We are very happy with the many new visitors we have, and with the continued connections we are making with fellow parents in the school. Pray for these new visitors to hear and believe the Gospel! Many of them have never heard the story of salvation before.

The church in Prado has a great opportunity to buy the house that we are currently living in. It would be a big help for everyone involved – the church would acquire something that could be used to missionary work for many years, and it would help us to reduce our costs considerably. Pray that obstacles can be overcome, and this great step can be taken.

## Something New

We have a member, Mari, who is about to retire and move back to her hometown in northern Uruguay, where there isn't a Lutheran church. We are hoping that this could be the beginning of work there! Pray for Mari and for the Lord's to reach the people of Tacuarembó.



*One of our most important tasks here – maybe our single most important – is helping to identify and train new workers for the church. We want to create servants who can, in turn, create more, with a goal of a local church not dependent on foreign missionaries. Angie works hard to equip and train educational leaders, everything from day school Christian Education teachers to Sunday School teachers and lay catechists; I work on equipping lay leaders and raising up potential pastors and other church workers.*

*Aroldo (left) is originally from Cuba and was an evangelist for many years there. He came to Uruguay for economic reasons, but his heart for reaching the lost hasn't changed. He is studying Christian doctrine with me now and looking forward to getting into one of the study programs available to students from Latin America.*

**EMAIL CHANGE:** There has been a change in our emails.... From now on we will be [james.sharp@lcms.org](mailto:james.sharp@lcms.org) or [angela.sharp@lcms.org](mailto:angela.sharp@lcms.org) ... The old [lcmsintl.org](mailto:lcmsintl.org) emails will be discontinued soon. Thanks!

# Sharp \*Family\* News



## PLEASE PRAY FOR US:

- Safe travels and a productive time for our Mission Foro in Uruguay at the end of April.
- School started at the beginning of the month. Pray for the Sharp kids and for the classes taught by Angie and the Christian Education team in the school.
- We will be having outreach activities in Chapicuy during Holy Week for the first time. Pray that we reach many people who are not connected to a Christian church.
- Participation in worship and other activities really drops off in the summer in Uruguay. Pray that folks get back into the habit of regular worship, Bible study, and service.
- Pray for the continued recovery of James' dad, Tom.

WITNESS ALWAYS



*The Under-17 Women's World Cup was held in Uruguay! We attended a match of USA vs North Korea and met the mascot, "Capi."*

## IT'S A LONG STORY

So, we have been through a lot of the last several months. I won't go into all of the details, but a lot of things have happened. My (James) dad, went into the hospital on January 6th, and at some point in the hospital, had a heart attack. He was near death and we had to make the quick decision to go to see him in Texas (where my parents were spending the winter with my brother). There is only one flight between Uruguay and the USA per day.

We went, and we are glad we did. I feel like our being there—especially the grandkids—helped give my dad the will to keep trying

when it really seemed like he might give up. It was also good to give my mom and brother and sister-in-law some "relief" from the constant strain of being with dad. I cooked some meals and we did some shopping and spent a lot of time with Grandma and Grandpa and Uncle Matt and Aunt Regina, and I am very thankful to our regional leadership who helped make it possible and to my colleagues in Uruguay who helped cover for my absence. In God's timing, it was about the only time we could have gotten away and we are glad we did. Very special thanks to Pastor John Selle of Faith Lutheran in Georgetown, Texas, for the pastoral care he gave to my mom and dad.

My dad finally got out of the hospital yesterday (March 27th) and was transferred to a rehabilitation facility—and then had to go back to the hospital with chest pains.

Please continue to keep my dad, Tom, and my mom, Linda, in your prayers. It is going to be a long road still to get to go home.

## GROWING KIDS

The kids are all growing like crazy and folks probably wouldn't even recognize them, especially Elias. He is taller than his mom now and will probably be taller than dad soon. All the kids like to take advantage of the nice weather to kick or throw the ball around in our yard. They started school again in March, Elias is in the 2nd year of Liceo (8th grade), Ambrose is in the 6th year of Primaria (6th grade), Callie is in 4th, and Maggie is in 3rd. They all do very well in

*We know we would not be doing this important work without your help.*

*For your prayers, support, and encouragement, THANK YOU!*

*Yours in the True Light,*

*James, Angie,  
Elias, Ambrose, Callie, and Maggie  
John 1:9*



To support the LCMS through the work of James and Angie Sharp and family, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
P.O. Box 66861  
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

Mission Central  
40718 Highway E 16  
Mapleton, Iowa 51034

*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](http://lcms.org/service). Click on "Service Opportunities."*