



News of the Week June 23, 2021

Prayers of the Week

Please remember in your prayers this week:

Prayers of thanksgiving and celebration for Pastor Abigail Cress-Orellano (Christ Lutheran, Libby) and her husband Hans, as they celebrate the birth of their son, Lazarus!

From the Montana Synod Prayer Calendar:

Lutheran Church of Sunburst Church, Sunburst
St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Shelby

Christikon Bible Camp, Pr. Director Mark Donald
Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp, Director Margie Fiedler
Upper Missouri Ministries Camp, Epping ND

North Carolina Synod
North/West Lower Michigan Synod



Words from the Bishop: Water





An Opportunity for Generosity

The Montana Synod is offering a special opportunity for individuals to share in the gift of CAMP this summer. Make a special donation today to allow EVERY KID the chance to go to camp.

100% of donations made to the MT Synod for this campaign will be split equally between Christikon and Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp for post COVID needs.



[Click here for a video from Christikon](#)

Check out these videos from camp!

Give Now

Select menu option
"Camps Special Appeal"

Or mail a check to:
Montana Synod, ELCA
1221 24th Street S
Great Falls, MT 59405

Now through June 30



[Click here for a video from FLBC](#)

Thank you for your generosity!

[Click here to download this poster for use in your congregation's communications!](#)

Living in faith and hope, and serving with love

The COVID-19 pandemic has cruelly exposed the poverty, inequality, and weak democracy affecting South American countries. The disease, the structure of societies, misguided government policies, and unequal access to vaccines have placed the population in a tragic dilemma: die from Covid or starve to death.

Quarantines, isolations, and economic shutdowns have been ordered to stop the virus partially, but they have highlighted the profound problems affecting the poorest. Today 22% of the region's population lives in poverty, earning less than US\$5.5 a day. Still, in several South American countries, for example, in Colombia and Argentina, almost 50% are considered poor.

Most of the poor work in the informal economy; people survive on their daily income, so staying at home without working is to condemn oneself to misery. Governments cannot provide sufficient help to their citizens except through a difficult indebtedness that generates inflation and instability.

After a year and a half of confinement measures, hunger is beginning to win the day. Citizens can no longer stay at home, and the authorities give in.

Cities lift work restrictions, although national governments look at the statistics and indicate confinements. Families are more afraid of hunger and misery than of dying of Covid and decide to take the risk.

Poverty, informality, and inequality are growing because of the pandemic, but the virus is still out of control in the region, and hospital capacity is collapsing. By the end of June 2021, South America is the epicenter of the pandemic.

The unequal distribution of vaccines aggravates the situation. While countries in the Global North have coordinated production and stockpiled vaccines for up to two or three times the size of their population, South American countries are looking for vaccines wherever they can.

With all the deficiencies, controlling the pandemic is extremely difficult. The conditions of the population were already harsh before the pandemic, and covid has aggravated it. The social unrest expressed in the region in the second half of 2019 will return, and social outbursts will disrupt the fragile democracies.

Hopefully, by the end of 2021, vaccines will stop the virus, and countries will begin to redress the increase in inequality caused by the pandemic.

In this context, Lutheran churches have been very active in accompanying the mourning of thousands of families, sustaining faith and hope, and serving with love. Small churches that have lost many leaders killed by the pandemic have found effective words and actions to accompany many suffering people in need.

In addition to traditional and permanent diaconal ministries, the churches have delivered food, protection material, medicines, general and health education. Partner churches in South America suspended their face-to-face activities but developed new ways to meet and help the most vulnerable. In many cases, churches expanded liturgical services using online media and instant communication applications.



Lutheran Church in Venezuela (IELV) in Tinaquillo, alleviating hunger facing the country critical food shortage tragedy



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