

July 3, 2010

Dear brothers and sisters of of our Hermanamiento of Laurel Galan,

We at Peace Lutheran Church hold you in our hearts and prayers. During this season of Pentecost, we hope that you experience the Holy Spirit's presence in your lives.

We want to share with you what is happening at Peace Lutheran in recent week:

- On May 2nd, we celebrated Partnership Sunday with the entire congregation. The sanctuary was beautifully decorated with cloths and stoles from your country. The worship started by reminding ourselves of the long history of our partnership connection. The liturgy contained elements of Latin American Liberation Theology. Instead of a sermon, we listened to the Gospel passage of Luke 24: 13 – 35 (the disciples' journey to Emmaus), and discussed in small groups throughout the sanctuary, what struck us in this text, what experiences of loss we had and you may have had, what opened the disciples' eyes, and what we may recognize through our partnership. The service concluded with a dancing handshake line, similar to what we have experienced in South Africa.
- On May 23rd, we celebrated the Feast of Pentecost. While, we did not have a group of confirmands this year, our group of Catechumens, adult members of Peace who come together to deepen their faith and understanding of the Gospel, were blessed. After the worship service, the congregation had a picnic at a local park. Everyone enjoyed the springtime sun and games and fellowship over lunch.
- Emily, our seminarian, had her first meeting with her support committee in May. This group of Peace members will accompany her in her pastoral and theological training at Peace. Emily will be doing her Clinical Pastoral Education at a hospital in Chicago this summer. She will return in the fall and work with us throughout all of next year.
- On May 30th, the Sunday School children brought special thank you gifts to their Sunday School teachers. The children are blessed by the inspiring children's' time with Pastor Anita and other Sunday School helpers.

- On June 13, two of our high school graduates and one of our college graduates were recognized for their academic achievements.
- Apart from our congregational life, all families are feeling the economic recession. Some are either struggling or someone else in their family is financially struggling. People who were retired have started working again and others have been laid off. There is a very high unemployment in California, especially for the young people coming out of college. Services that are offered to the less fortunate are being drastically reduced or cut all together. It will affect the sick, poor, elderly, and young people. The churches and non-profits in the communities are completely overwhelmed. Yet, most of us are optimistic that things will get better. We will solve these issues and be able to move forward.

How are people in your community doing now? We were concerned to hear about the heavy rains; it seems as if it either rains too much or too little! With all that water hopefully the wells will not go dry this year and there will be enough to recharge to the groundwater basin. We pray for all in your congregation who are affected by the weather and by illness.

In closing, we want to quote words by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. that Pastor Steve shared with us in his newsletter:

" Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evening, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."

During this time after Pentecost, we pray that the Spirit who enlightened the minds of the disciples in order that they might understand the work and gift of Christ, may guide your and our lives as well. You are always in our hearts and prayers.

The Lord's Peace be with you,

Peace Lutheran Church

The Peace Partnership Group

P.S. We were overjoyed in August to receive your June 15th letter and were so interested in all of your news. We didn't receive your letter until after writing our above partnership letter. We pray that the harvest has improved so that you are able to repay your revolving fund loans. We are excited to hear that Laurel Galan is getting electricity!! Please let us know when the project is complete. We were also so happy to hear about your Mother's Day celebration on June 17th. What a joyous day you had together!!