

February 23, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters of our Hermanamiento at Laurel Galan,

We at Peace Lutheran Church hold each one of you in our hearts and prayers. We hope this letter finds you well. We heard that you had a difficult winter with much rain and sickness. We are praying and hoping that your situation has improved and that all and in particular Enriqueta are doing better. We were glad to hear that Laurel Galan has electricity now. Is it available in every household? We have also heard about Julieta's and Elena's legal struggle for the farm La Nati which they plan to use for the farm school. We pray that the legal proceedings will come to a just and good conclusion soon, so that they may be able to visit you more often.

It is hard to believe that almost 2 months have passed since Christmas. Much has happened in the world, in our country and in our community.

We are encouraged by the struggles of the peoples in North Africa for more democracy and freedom and against poverty and oppression. We hope that efforts to bring more education and employment opportunities also to your community will be successful this year.

Here at our Peace community, we have heard passages from the Sermon on the Mount in recent weeks. How comforting it is to hear:

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Three weeks, ago, we celebrated our Small and Tall Family service. The Youth Group presented a Noah and the Ark puppet story for the little ones. Those of us who visited you in July 2009, still remember well how we played and learned with your precious children.

Also in early February, a meeting was held with local farmers to learn how Peace can support a Community Supported Agriculture project. Some families here grow vegetables and fruit in their backyards, but most food is bought in grocery markets and often we don't know much about how it is grown and how the workers are treated who plant and harvest it. We hope that you will have a plentiful growing season this year.

In January, Pastor Elizabeth invited our congregation to read the entire bible in 365 days. Many have joined this group and journey through the bible in an entire year.

Many families in our community are still suffering from unemployment or salary cuts. Moreover, many programs to assist low income families are scheduled to be cut on the state and national level. Some businesses are doing better, but they are still not hiring a lot of the unemployed.

Please know that we pray for you at every Sunday service and every day. We pray that God may bless your community this year with health, food, good weather, education and work opportunities.

The Lord's Peace be with you all!

The Peace Partnership Group