

Mission to the Children

News Update

Website: www.missiontothechildren.org

Email: info@missiontothechildren.org

February, 2021

PASTOR'S CORNER

Luke 2:10–11 (EHV) ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: ¹¹Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord.”

We are familiar with the angel's message of good news that we hear every Christmas. With the shepherds, we annually rejoice in birth of our Savior Jesus who was born in Bethlehem. But do your celebrations this year look different than normal as you close out Christmas and swing into the new year? I am guessing so as is the case with so many of us this year. We have traveled on unprecedented ground since this past year and witnessed things no one expected. So much has seemed new and unfamiliar, and it has not always been for the better.

Yet one thing remains the same – the good news we have in Jesus' birth that drives away our fear. As prophesied in the Old Testament, Jesus has come into this world so that he could defeat sin at the cross and bring us salvation. While it would not happen until 33 years after his birth, the angels could rightly tell the shepherds to be of no fear in light of the good news that Jesus was going to accomplish. The shepherds, as a result, could look forward to their uncertain future with

peace for they knew their Savior was born.

We too can have peace as we look forward to our coming weeks and months. Although for now, the coronavirus pandemic will not be gone, our fear surely can be gone because of Jesus' birth. Our Savior has certainly come just as God prophesied! We have the good news of salvation applied to our tainted souls to wash our sins away! We have peace for the future, even when our hearts are tempted to be otherwise afraid. That is all because of what happened at Christmas and its long-lasting effects.

As you read this newsletter, I pray that your soul's Christmas joy increases even more this year as you learn how *Mission to the Children* has shared the angel's good news with those in Sonora, Mexico. I also pray that you look forward to your foreseeable future with the same peace and joy that the shepherds had because of who was born to us on Christmas long ago – our Savior Jesus Christ.

Pastor Tim Patoka

President's Corner

It would be an understatement to say that my family and friends would never believe that I could be rendered “speechless.” But I must confess that I have been totally overwhelmed by the selflessness of

our MttC volunteers during the holiday season. Because MttC has hundreds of supporters and volunteers, we are always hesitant to mention names so as not to offend anyone by leaving them off.

However, I feel simply compelled to name the following who sought me out and offered their services at a time when it looked like we might not be able to provide any posadas in Sonora this year: Karen Kilchenmann for assigning names to various groups to gather Christmas gifts for hundreds of children; Greg and Leann Breza and Susan Garcia who flew from WA/OR to stay in Tucson for more than two days to purchase, wrap and prepare gifts for an entire large village; Delene Saboz for spending hours at my house wrapping and labeling gifts until our fingers were almost raw; Jan and Dennis Krueger who did emergency “on-call” last minute shopping so no child would be left out; Jeff and Lori Hauser who loaded hundreds of gifts and made three trips across the border to Sasabe; and last but not least Pastor Alejandro Sanchez Amaya who delivered the gifts and held posada services in eight villages all by himself! Then there are all of you out there who took names, bought, and wrapped gifts and mailed them or even hand-delivered them from outlying parts of the state.

We cannot forget the Flying Gringo, John Kramer, who orchestrated all of this from a distance and office manager Karen Manning who constantly helps me pick up all the pieces and fit them together to make

events like this happen! Thank you! Your awesome display of Christian love has rendered me speechless!

One of the very special events that MttC neither foresaw nor initiated, but that began as an outgrowth from the existence of the mission, is the meeting together of Spanish-speaking pastors from Arizona and Latin America and world missions several times a year for joint Bible study and fellowship. These meetings last 1-3 days and are appreciated by all the attendees. See Pastor Tim Patoka’s report on a recent meeting elsewhere in this newsletter.

The world experienced a unique year in 2020. The MttC board thanks all of you for your cherished and fervent prayers for the safety and welfare of the board, Pastor Alejandro, and our volunteers on both sides of the border. Most of all we thank and praise our Gracious and Merciful Lord who allows this mission to continue. A blessed and safe 2021 to all!

President, Ruth Schaller

Spanish Pastor’s Conference Report

***Rocky Point, Mexico
November 16 – 17, 2020***

On November 16 – 17, we had a Spanish Pastor’s Conference in Rocky Point, Mexico. Of the general invitation to the Spanish-speaking WELS pastors in the Southwest and the IELC (our sister Lutheran synod

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in Mexico) pastors in northern Mexico, there were 6 pastors in attendance – Alejandro Sanchez (from *El Buen Pastor* in Altar, Mexico), Jon Buchholz (District President for the Arizona-California District of the WELS), Tom Zimdars (from *Santo Tomas* in Phoenix, AZ), Frank Cossio (from *Santo Tomas* in Phoenix, AZ), Tim Flunker (WELS Hispanic Outreach Consultant), and myself (Tim Patoka from *Grace* in Tucson, AZ). Pastor Sanchez's newlywed wife Lenica Yaniel and stepdaughter Azlayn Sophia also came along.

The WELS pastors from the Tucson and Phoenix areas met in Why, AZ around 1 PM on November 16 before continuing together in the *Mission to the Children* (MttC) van to the Lukeville border crossing. After an uneventful crossing, we drove the remaining 60 miles to Rocky Point. We were blessed with wonderful views of God's creation throughout the entire trip including the Sonoran Desert, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, the Great Desert of Altar with its volcanic peaks and sand dunes, and the Sea of Cortez. Pastor Sanchez and his family met us at our humble lodgings in Rocky Point.

Once we got settled into our rooms, the pastors began our study of 1 Timothy 5 using materials that Pastor Flunker brought along. We enjoyed lively discussion based on the topics in 1 Timothy 5, insights from our various and unique ministries, jokes and explanations that naturally arise from cross-cultural communication, and the usual tangential conversation that occurs in any informal setting. Not only did we grow in understanding of God's Word, but we also strengthened the ties with our fellow brothers in the ministry and encouraged each other to serve in our respective calls.

Once our stomachs signaled the dinner hour, everyone jumped into the MttC van to enjoy a seafood dinner with a sunset view of the Sea of Cortez on the historic *Malecón* (boardwalk) in the Old Port. From there, we returned to our rooms for a devotional service followed by an evening of fellowship.

The next day, we enjoyed a continental breakfast that featured an assortment of locally baked sweet breads. After a morning devotional service, the pastors resumed their study of 1 Timothy 5 with many of the same additions, stories, and

encouragements from the day before. After a few hours of study and goodbyes, the WELS pastors left Rocky Point to return in time for their commitments back home. Along the way, we did a driving tour of Rocky Point's premiere Sandy Beach, high end beach resorts, and impossible to find airports. We were again blessed to have an uneventful border crossing back into the USA.

Even though the entire conference lasted less than 24 hours, the pastors and I found this trip to be very edifying. As we have had countless events in church and at home cancelled, we thank MttC for lending us their van for this opportunity to gather for fellowship and study in God's Word. Besides the great weather and picturesque landscape, we also strengthened that special bond we have as Spanish-speaking shepherds of God's flock. While our ministries may greatly vary, we all returned to our homes refreshed to continue serving the Lord and ready to gather again in January for our next one-day Spanish Pastor's Conference.

By Pastor Tim Patoka

Here is the desert landscape in the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument (just north of the Lukeville border crossing). This combination of flat desert land with various cacti and desert plants backed up with rugged mountains was typical for most of our drive until Rocky Point itself.



Here are the humble lodgings we spent most of our time with the MttC van parked below. The hotel's owner also had a thriving business of storing luxury boats and campers in the enclosed spaces below our rooms.



Here is a view from the hotel's roof. Right in front of us is *Whale Hill*, the only part of Rocky Point's geography that is not naturally flat. As indicated by its name, *Whale Hill* is roughly shaped like a whale if you were to look at it from above. The *Sea of Cortez* and much of Rocky Point is behind the hill.

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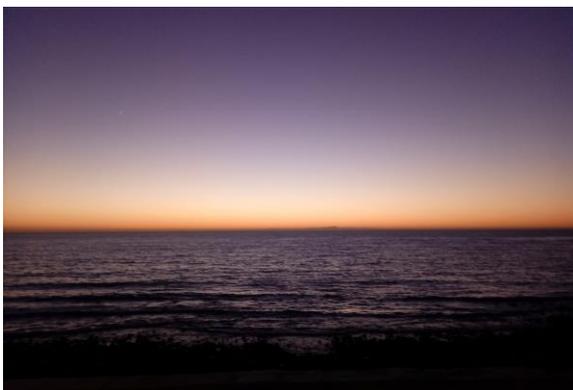
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Here is a sunset view of the *Sea of Cortez* from our restaurant. With it being in the *Gulf of California*, it is supposedly rare for the waves to do more than lap across the shore. At night, you could just make out the lights on the other side of the *Sea of Cortez* in Baja California.



Here is a view of the *Sea of Cortez* with some tide pools in the foreground. There were many tide pools for us to see since we came during low tide.



Here is a picture of my food called *aguachiles*. It is a soup of chopped up seafood, raw vegetables, and slices of onion in a broth made from regional chili peppers, lime juice, and other good ingredients. It is typically served in a volcanic *molcajete* (a mortar without the pestle) with tortillas and soda crackers nearby.



Behind my food is Pastor Cossio's fried fish which was literally that – a

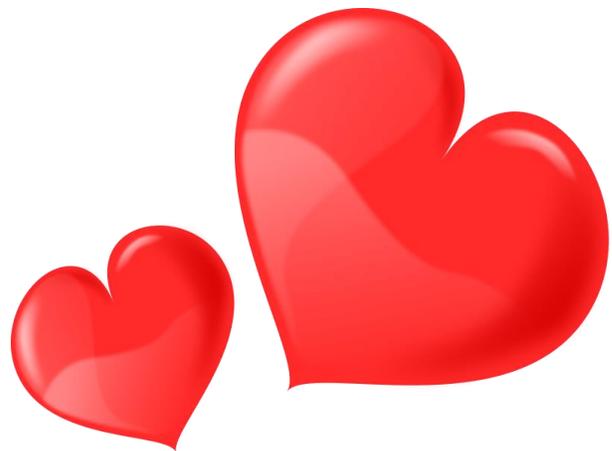
whole fish that was deep-fried and served with its eyes and teeth intact. Pastor Cossio remarked how it reminded him of his native Cuba and its regional food.

Pastor Alejandro

Pastor Alejandro was in an unbelievably bad car accident. Pastor Alejandro spent Christmas night in his wrecked car with multiple injuries. He was discovered the following morning. Pastor Alejandro received cracked ribs, a concussion and severely injured foot in which he had to have surgery on.



Thank our Lord for his safe keeping and healing. Here you can see that Pastor Alejandro was back preaching in his church shortly after his surgery.



Thank You From Our Hearts

A great big thank you to all of you who have helped Mission to the Children in 2020. As in the past years, you are the ones who keep this Mission going. The Lord has truly blessed us with your love and support.

May 2021 be a better year for all of us and may the Lord Bless you and always keep you safe. Again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

***From the
Mission to the Children's Staff
and Volunteers.***