

# ILAG Newsletter November 2011



November 7, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Blessings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The last month in addition to the normal ministry brought a lot of rain, presidential elections, the end of the school year and our last delegation visit of the year.

On October 20th, the sun finally came out after 11 days of constant rain fall delivered up to 24 inches of water over large portions of



Guatemala. As glorious as it was to feel the sun again the storm affects in Guatemala were far from over.

The rain began as communities prepared to harvest the crops that would help

them subsist for the next six months, crops that would be not only their tortillas, but also their seed for the next planting. The harvest would allow them to make the payment on their land as a community, a harvest that would be the

way they would be able to send a child or maybe two to school in the nearest town.

Reports are still coming in from our villages. Santa Elena 20 de Octubre was hardest hit in many respects. The river rose higher than anyone remembers since they resettled in Guatemala and when the flood waters receded the river had sent a new branch through the farm land of the village. Zaculeu had flood water in the homes of the members of ILA San Juan Bautista. In the remainder of the villages there was significant crop damage. We have been hesitant to say how much damage was



sustained since the members of the ILAG have continued with the harvest to see what can be saved. For the National Council Meeting on November 18th, the

leaders will be bringing reports of the damage their communities sustained. Once we have those reports we will be able to let you know what is needed to help.



## El Mirador School celebrates the end of the school year

55 children enrolled in our elementary school in 2011. 37 children completed the

school year in good standing, one child achieved their graduation from 6th grade. The month of October is a month of paperwork to fulfill the Ministry of Education requirements and with a new system this year it was especially demanding.

## ILAG Elementary

Mariela Mus, one of our teachers, will be holding vacation school this month to give the children an option to keep learning during vacation.

We ask for your prayers for the students of El Mirador School many come from homes where they witness violence, gang activity, and abuse. For the few hours that they are in school they have a safe, caring environment in which they can learn. During vacations many are exposed to situations that children should not have to be part of even more. Please pray that they are safe during school vacations.



The Before School Program of the ILAG finished its first year with 15 children in attendance. We look forward to continuing to grow this important ministry in 2012.



## Scholarship Recipients

The pastoral team of the ILAG attended the seminary presentations of Irving Poo and Jorge Aba. As part of their requirements for graduation they had to have a project in a local elementary school teaching about protecting the environment and their groups had to improve the school they were assigned to. During the presentations Jorge told the history of the school they attended and Irving sang a song in honor of their seminary director.



Along with Jorge and Irving we have two other ILAG youth graduating as professionals this school year. Grecia Marroquin, daughter of Padre Jose Luis Marroquin, who received her title as a bi-lingual secretary. She already has job offers. Justino Sacrap, from Cimiento de la Esperanza, who is graduating with a high school level degree in renewable natural resources. Each of these young adults received a scholarship from the ILAG. Thank you for your support of the scholarship program.

# Guatemala Elects next President

General Otto Perez Molina from the Patriota Party was elected president of Guatemala on November 6, 2011 defeating Manuel Baldison from the Lider Party. Of the 7,340,841 registered voters 4,464,571 exercised their civil right and voted (60.82% turn out). The President Elect received 53.74% of the vote, winning in 10 of the 22 departments in Guatemala. The Vice-President Elect is Roxana Baldetti, the first female vice-president in Guatemala. We pray that God guides the new leadership in Guatemala to be just, and there is more peace in Guatemala. Amen.

## Delegation from Shepherd of the Hills LC, Austin, TX

For the eighth time a delegation from Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Austin, TX visited their partner congregation of ILA Virgen del Rosario, Aurora 8 de Octubre.



Thankfully, due to the election year, the roads were cleaned up quickly of debris from the many landslides between Guatemala City and Aurora 8 de Octubre. On the way to Coban, the delegation met up with Bishop Horacio at a restaurant that we frequently eat at on the way to the rural churches in Alta Verapaz and Northern Quiche. Over the visits Bishop Horacio has become the pastor of the owners of the restaurant and on that particular visit baptized their grandchild. There was water, there was word... why not baptism.

It was a peaceful visit marked by lack of conflict. ILA Virgen del Rosario has had some growing pains and leadership problems over the year. The man who initially contacted the ILAG to have us accompany them pastorally has not wanted to attend leadership training or allow anyone else to attend. They are a community where other denominations have split into two congregations when there has been conflict. Two young men have come to ILAG leadership retreats for one year and with this delegation visit had their first opportunity to be leaders in their community. It was a true joy to see the growth of not only the two young men but the way the entire church congregation functioned well together. May God continue to walk with this congregation, guiding them to work together and grow in faith and understanding.



There were 9 baptisms during the visit and three worship services during the visit. Last year when I was in Aurora 8 de Octubre I made a pastoral visit to a woman at the end of her pregnancy. That night she gave birth during a storm, the midwife could not be brought so the husband attended the birth. The next morning, the family honored me by giving the baby my name since I had been the last person to visit. Horacio baptized little Amanda on this visit. A group of young men were invited to visit from a neighboring village. They brought their marimba and added their music to the electric guitars and battery that ILA Virgen del Rosario prefers.



There was the usual visit to the fields, killing of the fatted calf, church school lessons and as tradition dictates in this partnership family hotdog roast and smore eating. The church looks forward to this every year. On this visit, the delegation prepared a powerpoint of pictures for the church to see both more of the delegation member's lives but also pictures from the past years. In eight years children grow up, youth now have children of their own-- in short they loved it.

In our closing evaluation we talked about the need to continue to teach the bible to our rural church members and to draw in the young adults (18-30 year olds). We need help in these areas-- pictures of bible stories, ways to teach the story and reach the youth. We welcome your involvement in this important ministry.

We are thankful for all of our partnerships, they add so much to the lives of the members of the ILAG. Long term relationships allow for mutual growth and true understanding across culture and language.



## Women's Ministry

This weekend marked the last weekend gathering of Guatemala City Women. Karen Castillo once again brought the women

women are only interested in the sewing projects and receiving more fabric to make clothing and feel that all the bible study is a waste of time. The women who have been consistently attending feel differently. They remarked how they feel that they have support now in their lives and are grateful to be learning more about the faith that they profess is important but rarely live like it is important.

The women from the rural ILAG churches have expressed interest in coming in for retreats once again. There are several villages with two to six women interested. It is wonderful when the place to begin is given. Now, the work begins to honor their interest in learning and gathering.

together for a time of bible study, sewing and mutual consolation and support. The group has fluctuated as many

- November 18-23 National Council Meeting
- November 27 Anniversary ILAG Divino Salvador del Mundo, El Mirador
- December 1-20 Bishop Horacio visit to rural churches
- December 6-19 Castillo Olson visit to Southeastern Synod

### ILAG Calendar 2012

- January 4-15 Castillo Olson visit to St. Paul Area Synod Churches
- January 16 First day of School in El Mirador School
- January 20-22 Health Training taught by Delegation from St. Luke's, Portland, OR
- January 23-27 Delegation St. Luke's, Portland, OR remains to visit churches
- January 28- February 4 Delegation from St. Michael's Roseville, All Saints Norwood Young America to Cimiento de la Esperanza, ILAG Santa Cruz de la Esperanza
- February 10-12 Leadership Retreat
- February 5-17 Delegation of Two groups from SE Synod, one to help with Leadership Retreat, one to help with small projects at Lutheran Center
- February 22 Ash Wednesday
- February 24- March 6 Castillo Olson trip to Silverdale Lutheran, Silverdale, WA to teach Lay School of Theology
- March 9-17 Delegation Our Savior's Circle Pines to visit Nueva Guatemala
- March 11-17 Delegation St. Anthony Park
- March 23-31 Delegation Grace to visit Santa Elena 20 de Octubre
- April 1-7 Delegation First United Lutheran Church to visit City churches
- April 8 Easter
- April 13-15 Women's Retreat
- May 4-8 National Council Meeting
- May 17 Ascension
- May 14-20 Partner churches to visit ILAG Milagro de Dios
- June 10-16 Delegation from Texas, contact Jose Saavedra
- June 16-23 Delegation from Como Park, visit Santa Amelia
- July 6-8 Leadership Retreat for ordained leaders and spouses
- July 29 -August 9 Delegation Augustana to La Esmeralda (tent dates)
- August 10-12 Health Training (dates not confirmed yet)
- September 21-23 Leadership Retreat, celebration of 50 years of ordination of Bishop Horacio
- October 5-7 Women's Retreat
- October 15-31 Close of School Year El Mirador School
- October 20-26 Delegation visit Shepherd of the Hills, Austin, TX (tent dates)
- October 26-28 Youth Retreat
- November 16-20 National Council Meeting