

SERVING THE LORD IN

Latin America & the Caribbean: missionaryMAC



February 2023

News from Volunteer Coordinator Erin Mackenzie | missionaryMAC.blogspot.com |  [erin.mackenzie5](https://www.facebook.com/erin.mackenzie5)

(If you received a hard copy of this and would like to help me be green and save on postage, please email erin.mackenzie@lcms.org.)

You can hardly go wrong with chocolate at Valentine's Day, whether nestled in a heart-shaped box, wrapped in shiny pink or red foil, or even tempered and drizzled over a perfectly ripe, juicy strawberry. The cacao used to make these and other confections *might* just have come from the tropics; the climate in this part of the world creates an ideal growing environment. Ever wondered just what makes up those magical beans?

1. 54% fat (cocoa butter)
2. 31% carbohydrates
3. 11% protein
4. 3% polyphenols
5. < 1% minerals

Source: Ajaw Chocolate, Ltd. San Ignacio, Belize



Touring Chocolala during the March 2020 DR FORO.

Mr. Sun, Sun, Mr. Golden Sun...

We're just coming off some of the shortest, darkest days of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. I'm extra careful not to trip over my own two feet during the first lap or two of morning runs lit only by moonlight and a handful of lampposts near the botanical garden's entrance. And last week, to be in Santo Domingo for an 8:30 am residency card renewal appointment, I departed under cover of night. Sunrise only varies by an hour or so here, but lately it's been after 7:00 am, and 4+ years deployed is enough to notice that's much later than it will be in the dog days of summer.

As I blindly round another bend in the blacktop path or my headlights reflect off the white lane stripes of the *Autopista*, the blackness is almost deep enough for a niggling doubt to creep up until the first rays peek over the horizon line: *will* the sun *ever* come up?

In Job 38, God poses a series of rhetorical questions to Job. Verses 12's:

"Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place...?"

Even stripped of his family, dwelling, and livelihood, Job still never loses faith in the God who has "commanded the morning" since *days* began, period:

"God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day." —Genesis 1:5

Until the end of time, the sun's daily march from east to west reminds us of God's faithfulness. He kept His promise to send a Savior to redeem all people from their sins; who are we to doubt that He'd ever neglect to look after something so trivial as calling forth the most brilliant of all stars at its precisely appointed time? For all this and more, we magnify Him. Scripture even goes so far as to use the planet's circadian rhythm as a euphemism for how often: "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!" (Psalm 113:3).

**Making
Disciples
for Life** 



Praises and Petitions

1. Thanksgiving for the safe arrival of Darlo and Edvard, new residential seminary students from Haiti, to the DR.
2. Thanksgiving for the faithful service of the LCMS Executive Director of Accounting (and former missionary to Panama!), Ross Stroh, who retired 2/3.
3. Thanksgiving for the start of ESL classes in Belize.
4. For the Peru church planting team amid ongoing political protests, at times violent.
5. For all who mourn the death of Edilberto Méndez Mora (director of LHM-Panama and student in CMSCR's distance program).

On the 8-track

Iglesia Luterana Redentor in Panama City, Panama, has been under construction since *my* first time there in 2016. At the



Alliance missionary Raphael Voigt (left) got in on the power tool action.

October 2022 Panama FORO, LAC regional leadership committed to finishing the project ASAP with the help of volunteers. Enter: me. In the months since, I've helped create an aggressive 8-team plan for turning a 2nd story space into a livable parsonage that can double as housing for future volunteers, FORO partners, and other guests. Team 1 is on the ground as I write this; teams 2 and following are waiting for YOU and YOUR CHURCH! Email mission.teams@lcms.org.

Home Service Corner

Together with field leadership, I've determined that a **spring 2024** home service better suits both my needs and LAC's than when I'd ordinarily be due to go in the fall of this year. I apologize for any inconvenience and look forward to sharing specifics as they fall into place.



(Above) With the Paneque family (Cuba) at the DR missionary/seminary Christmas party.



(Left): Soaking up some rays at the Valle de los Lili's rest stop.

(Right): Tirzah, Ashley, and I about to chow down on some tuna pasta salad, cabbage slaw, rice & beans, stewed chicken, and tostones post-hike.



Quote of the Month

"Art is a process; not a product."

—MaryAnn Kohl, Bright Ring Publishing

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