



Merry Christmas!

A Christmas letter from
Jim and Liisa Tino
Santiago, Chile

How can this be? - Luke 1:34

The angel's announcement to Mary took her by surprise. Even though it was “good news of great joy for ALL people”, Mary was focused on other things. Pregnant? A baby? How can this be? We can understand her confusion - after all, she was a virgin. A baby out of wedlock wasn't in her plans.

Lots of things in our lives don't go according to plan. Unexpected illness, unexpected job loss, unexpected problems can throw us for a loop. But then again, there are the unexpected blessings - the great phone call or wonderful visit, a financial windfall, plans that actually do work out.. and even better than expected!

Our God is the God of the unexpected. God solved the biggest problem the world has ever known - not covid, but separation from God because of our sins. Who would have expected His solution? Not immunity or social distancing, but a baby. Intimacy. Becoming one of us, in a manger. God in the flesh, come not to inoculate us from sin, but to take our sin-sickness upon Himself.

Thousands of years of waiting, and no one saw it coming.

Don't be surprised when God doesn't act according to plan!



Liisa and I love Christmas letters! We love catching up on the news from our family and friends. It's a time to focus on the positive, review our blessings, and share all the good things that are happening in our lives. Just once, though, I'd like to get a Christmas letter that shares all the things that didn't work out during the year. Things that didn't go according to plan. Wouldn't that be... different?

In that spirit, here's a few things that **didn't** go according to plan on the Chile mission field in 2021, along with some things that worked out better than expected! This letter is longer than usual, so settle in with a favorite hot or chilled beverage and enjoy!

Things that didn't go as expected...

Closed borders: In January, it looked like Chile was opening up after being locked down for nearly all of 2020. We scheduled our furlough for April - June, with our departure from Chile on March 28. On March 29, Chile closed its borders. Just made it out in time!

Frustrated replacements: Rev. Paul (Bo) and Barb Brink had agreed to serve as our replacements during furlough. We were all looking forward to seeing God use their gifts of visitation, evangelism, and teaching in our mission. Unfortunately, COVID restrictions during their entire 3 months in Chile severely limited what they could do. It was frustrating for them - and for us.

Flood: Record-setting rains in Florida raised the underground water table, flooding the cellar at our Miramar house. As many of you know, our daughter Sonrisa, husband Ty and their family live there. The lower level of the Miramar house is also the "home office" for Global Lutheran Outreach where employee Bill Kraft keeps things on track. New sump pump is now installed.

No entry: As our furlough ended, Chile's borders were still closed. We had to postpone our arrival for two weeks, finally returning mid-July. After 15 days of quarantine, we were finally able to resume our ministry at the beginning of August.



above: Pastor Bo and Barb Brink leading worship to an empty house (but also online) during covid lockdown in Santiago.

Roof repair: The two weeks extra in the States allowed us to get quotes on a roof replacement for our house in Miramar. Florida is hurricane country. If the inspector doesn't approve your roof, then you can't get insurance. No insurance = no mortgage. No mortgage = bank repossession. Our roof did not pass inspection and had to be urgently replaced.

Covid passport: While a "covid passport" is a topic of discussion in the States, it is a reality in Chile. Called a "pase de movilidad", those who don't possess one are restricted from indoor venues and inter-regional travel. Liisa and I were vaccinated in the States and got our "pase de movilidad", but on December 1 the Chilean government de-activated it for anyone over 50 who has not received a booster dose. Liisa and I are over 50, and we are not going to get the booster. So.

Surgery: At our annual physical (in Santiago), the doctor ordered Jim to see a specialist to evaluate a hernia that he has had for quite some time. The specialist was surprised at the size of the thing, and highly recommended surgery. Jim went under the knife the day after Thanksgiving.

Court: Pesky neighbors in Santiago complained about the temporary chapel we built on our back patio in Santiago. The municipality ordered us to take it down. We refused because it is not in violation of any building code. The municipality is taking us to court on January 5th.



right: our chapel, centerpiece of our court summons

Things that exceeded our expectations!



* **The church is growing!** During 2021, we rejoiced to celebrate four infant baptisms, two adult baptisms, and six adult confirmations, four of whom are immigrants that we housed.

* **During 2021, we sent over 210,000 doses of medicine** to Venezuela as a part of our Venezuela Relief project. [You can read more about that here.](#)

* In spite of setbacks in Chile, our time of **furlough in the States went well**, allowing us to reconnect with our mission partners and to make new friends, as well as visit all of our family!

* **Our resale shop** on our rented mission property in Santiago continues to grow, under the leadership of member Elianeth. This is becoming an important source of income to help finance the ministry.



* Our **temporary immigrant housing ministry** provided a place of refuge for 29 immigrants in 2021, 16 for short-term lodging and 13 for long-term housing and resettlement. We bade farewell to Luis, Gixon, and Roberto, all of whom have steady jobs and their own housing. We welcomed new arrivals Oscar and wife Oriana, and Francisco. They joined residents Abrahan and Hayvis with daughters Valeria and Valentina; Betsi; Jose; and Adolfo. [Read more here.](#)

* As the church grows, the **time for us to “turn over the reins”** to local leadership has arrived. The congregation voted to extend a call to pastor Alejandro Lopez, a Chilean pastor currently serving in Panama. We pray that the Lord would guide their decision!

Prayers and Praises

PRAY FOR those who are mourning, especially for those who lost loved ones during this past year. Christmas can be a very sad time for those who deeply miss the presence of family and friends who have passed on.

PRAISE GOD that for the first time, we will have family with us here in Chile during Christmas! There are still many hurdles to overcome for them to be able to enter the country, so pray that they are approved for entry to Chile: Gabi, Daniel and children Kyla and Calvin; and Ben (coming from Guatemala - at this point, it looks doubtful that he will be able to enter the country).

PRAY FOR the victims of the tornadoes and storms that struck Kentucky, Illinois, Arkansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee, and most recently in western Iowa.

PRAISE GOD for sparing GLO Missionary Support Director Mr. Brent Friedrichs and his family from the tornado in Charter Oak, Iowa.

PRAY FOR our court case on January 5 - for an impartial judge who is willing to temper the zealotry of over-reaching local government officials.

PRAISE GOD for Jim's successful surgery for hernia repair here in Santiago, and for healing for pastor Paul (Bo) Brink, whose cancer is now in remission.

PRAY FOR our Christmas outreach events in Santiago: a Venezuelan-style Christmas dinner on December 19; and our children's Christmas program on December 26.

PRAISE GOD for the growth of our mission resale shop and for Elianeth and other faithful members who lead this ministry.

PRAY FOR pastor Alejandro Lopez and wife Laura as they consider the call from our congregation to serve here in Santiago.

PRAY FOR God to guide the presidential elections here in Chile on this Sunday, December 19.

Support Corner

We are very thankful for all of your prayers, encouragement, and support through this year of unexpected challenges and blessings! Prayerfully consider partnering with us so we can continue to share the Good News of Great Joy for All the World to all the world - in Chile and in every place where God calls us!



GIVE NOW

You can make a contribution to our ministry by clicking the green button above, or mail a check to:

Global Lutheran Outreach

6709 Ficus Dr.

Miramar, FL 33023 (write "Tino - Chile" on the memo line of the check or e-check)

Video Glimpses

Here are a few brief video snapshots of our ministry in Chile:

- [Singing the "Aleluya" before the reading of the Gospel.](#)
- [Jim preaching](#)
- [Part of Betsi's confirmation vows](#)
- [Liisa doing music therapy at Casa Betesda](#)
- [Handbell rehearsal "O Come Emmanuel"](#) (original composition by Liisa)

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Global Lutheran Outreach | 6709 Ficus Drive, Miramar, FL 33023

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