



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

DECEMBER 2023

Two grandpas, one baptism!

*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
(Luke 2:7, 13-14)*

Two grandpas, one baptism! Last Sunday (December 17) in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, Rev. Byron Paz and I had the great joy and privilege of baptizing our newest grandson, Jaakko Rene Tino Paz. Jaakko is the firstborn of our son Benjamin and his wife Scarlett. Pastor Byron is Scarlett's father and pastor of "Christ our

Savior" Lutheran Church in Puerto Barrios.

A new child of God received into the family of faith! In heaven, the angels rejoiced. We didn't get to see the angels, but here on earth, we rejoiced - parents and grandparents and even great-grandparents, family, relatives, friends, and congregation. After the service, we celebrated with cake and soft drinks.

In a Bethlehem manger, there was no cake to celebrate the birth of a Child. Neither does it seem as though there were any extended family members present, although some shepherds did show up. But the angels... ah, the angels! A whole multitude of them came from heaven to announce His birth! What a sight that must have been!

The cake was delicious, but if I had a choice, I would have rather seen the angels.

Do you ever wish you could see the angels? Wouldn't it be great if God would reveal His glory to us in unmistakable ways, do the miracle, clear the path, remove our problems?

Sometimes He does that - sometimes, but not all the time. I think that's because if God made our lives problem-free, then we wouldn't see much need for Jesus. When we are in the pressure-cooker of life, that's when our faith becomes more meaningful and we seek Jesus more earnestly.

Jesus came to us in a manger in Bethlehem - not to hide, but to be found. God Himself, revealed in the flesh. The angels were to make sure we didn't miss it.

In the midst of the busyness of the season, don't miss it! Make the journey to kneel at the manger of our Savior and King. Oh come, let us adore Him!



Kneeling before the King

* **THANK YOU for your prayers for Scarlett's visa!** On December 14, she received her USA visa AND baby Jaakko was approved for his US passport! They will soon be scheduling visits with supporting congregations.

* Lord of Life, we praise You for receiving **Jaakko** as Your own child through the waters of baptism. Keep him firm in the faith as he grows under Your watchful grace.

* **For the bereaved:** Lord, we know that in the midst of Christmas celebrations, this time can be painful for those who've lost loved ones. Wrap your arms of love around those who are grieving, reminding each of us that our true home awaits us with You.

photo credit: GLO missionary D. Ernst, Venezuela



Thank you for being our partners in God's mission to seek and to save the lost! We couldn't do it without you. We pray that your Christmas will be blessed by our Almighty God and that you will find joy, peace, and love in the Christchild, born to save.

[To learn more about our ministry or to give a gift to help support us, click here.](#)

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