

From Everywhere to Everywhere

The monthly newsletter of Global Lutheran Outreach

March 2024 | No. 12



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Dear James,

"Didn't our hearts burn within us?"
(Luke 24:32)

Flabbergasted. Gobsmacked. (Aren't those great words? I have been waiting for a chance to use them!)

That's how Liisa and I felt the first time we witnessed the Holy Week celebrations in Antigua, Guatemala in 1989. We were new missionaries then, having just finished language school and preparing for deployment to our assignment in Venezuela. Someone told us, "You should make sure that you see Holy Week in Antigua. It's quite a spectacle."

Spectacle was an understatement. We were completely blown away by the "celebration", if you can call it that. Crowds everywhere; different religious processions at all times of day; streets covered in "alfombras" (read more about that below); musicians playing funeral dirges; and everywhere, depictions of the crucifixion of Christ. But no resurrection.

What's Easter without the resurrection? What is *Christianity* without the resurrection? Guatemalans (like some Lutherans) are fixated on the crucifix. They commemorate the death of Christ in all its gory detail, celebrate it, revel in it - but that doesn't make them Christians.

The Holy Week road takes us through waving palm branches, to temple cleansing, Last Supper, betrayal, sweating blood, flogging, crucifixion, death, and burial. But the lenten road does not lead us to the cross - it leads us *through* the cross to the empty tomb! Our faith is not centered on a dead man, it is centered on the Living Lord! The cross is empty. The tomb is empty. And our hearts are full because of God's unrelenting love, mercy, and forgiveness. The risen Lord comes to us in Word, water, bread, and wine. "Didn't our hearts burn



Director's Corner

Rev. Dr. James Tino

My devotional readings this week took me to I Chronicles. Genealogies; son of this, that, or the other; unpronounceable names. Not exactly "Holy Week" stuff.

Or is it? In Chapter 25, David appointed musicians for the Lord's temple - 288 of them in all! They were divided into 24 groups of 12 (music during the Old Testament worship services was led by a team of musicians). Various instruments were used - harp, lyre and cymbals are most often mentioned. Then there's this: "*The six brothers... thanked and praised the Lord as they played lyres.*" (I Chron. 25:3, GWTN).

I can imagine the scene: a full temple, the priests presiding over the service, the 12-man praise band leading the music, while some of the musicians shout out prayers of thanksgiving and praise to God *while they are playing!*

What's the point? The point

within us?

Share it with a friend!

Know someone who would be interested in reading about, praying for, and praising God for His work through the missionaries of Global Lutheran Outreach? We encourage you to share this newsletter with others who may enjoy it! Or, simply share the link below.

If you have any suggestions for this newsletter, please pass them along. [You can email me here.](#)

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Did you miss previous issues of "From Everywhere to Everywhere"? [You can read or download them here!](#)



is this: resurrection is coming! Easter morning will soon dawn, and we will raise our voices in praise to our crucified and risen Lord Jesus!

Resurrection's coming! I pray that your Easter is filled with shouts of thanksgiving and praise.

This newsletter focuses on God's work through the missionaries of Global Lutheran Outreach in order to build a supportive community of prayer and praise.

Together, we rise up.

Rise with us!



GLO missionaries Rev. David and Luz Maria Ernst. Caramuca, Venezuela. Palm Sunday.

What does your Holy Week look like?

Growing up as a Lutheran in Michigan, my earliest recollections of Holy Week center on four events: Palm Sunday, which was also youth confirmation Sunday; Good Friday Tenebrae service (service of darkness); Easter morning worship; and finally back at home an Easter Egg hunt and Easter baskets!



Holy Week is celebrated all around the world by Christians and non-Christians alike. During our years in Venezuela, we were surprised to discover that Holy Week was basically a week off from work and school. The typical Venezuelan 'celebrated' Holy Week by going to the beach, often for the entire week! Worship wasn't much of a priority.

In Chile, people are lucky if they get Good Friday off from work. No beaches, though - Holy Week comes in early Fall (which begins on March 21 in Chile). Vacations are over, kids are back in school, swimming pools are recently closed. In Chile, Holy Week is largely ignored.

In Guatemala, though, Holy Week is a whole, 'nother thing! Celebrations are held throughout the country,



although the festivities in Antigua are the most famous. Preparations begin well in advance. During the days leading up to Holy Week, artists come out and adorn the cobblestone streets with "*alfombras*", which are carpets of brightly-colored sawdust depicting traditional Guatemalan scenes or Holy Week imagery. Some of the *alfombras* can stretch the length of an entire city block!

(Pictured: A painted sawdust alfombra on the cobblestone streets of Antigua, Guatemala)

The main events, though, are the numerous processions. Each processional features a lifelike wood or plaster sculpture of individual scenes of the events that happened between Jesus' arrest and his burial, or images of the Virgin Mary showing grief for the torture and killing of her son. These massive sculptures are mounted on what looks like a huge coffin made of wood and can weigh over two tons! They are carried on the shoulders by up to 40 volunteers, who no doubt believe they are earning some kind of penance. Leading the processional are often people dressed in Roman military costumes, like the soldiers who crucified Jesus. They "clear the way", pushing the crowds of onlookers onto the crowded sidewalks. The soldiers are often followed by the *penitentes* (repentant ones), dressed in long purple robes. After the sculpture, a crowd of weeping women dressed in New Testament garb (representing Mary) may follow; then come the musicians playing a funeral dirge. The entire procession plows right through the painstakingly-designed *alfombra*, scattering the sawdust into the cobblestones.



The processions begin on Palm Sunday, and occur every day of Holy Week - some days there are more, some days less. New *alfombras* are made to replace the ones that were trampled, often by working through the night. Then comes Easter Sunday and... NOTHING! No processions. The streets are empty, as are most of the churches. It's a celebration of the death of Christ, with no resurrection!

We thank the Lord for the missionaries of Global Lutheran Outreach who labor so hard to bring forgiveness, life and salvation to those who know nothing about Jesus, or who only know Him as



the crucified son of Mary.

(Pictured: The “penitentes” walk through clouds of incense.)

Important Deadline!



Last year, Thrivent members used their Choice Dollars to direct over \$10,000 to Global Lutheran Outreach. What a blessing! Designated Thrivent Choice dollars given to GLO go directly to the specified missionary or project. Undesignated Choice funds go to our Matching Fund program, matching dollar-for-dollar that missionaries raise for their support outside of the USA. **Your Choice dollars directed to**

GLO support missionaries!

You may direct your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Global Lutheran Outreach at any time during the year, but they have an expiration date. **Your 2023 Choice Dollars will expire March 31!** If you have remaining 2023 Choice Dollars, be sure to act by Easter Sunday to send them to support GLO missionaries.

If you need assistance determining whether you have Choice Dollars to distribute, [click this link for Thrivent](#), or call 800-847-4836. Thrivent's customer service can help you specify GLO as the recipient of your Choice Dollars.

Teachers needed and wanted!

Are you feeling the Lord calling you to something new? We have received many requests for teachers, both certified educators and "amateur" teachers. Some of the opportunities are English-language based, while others are teaching English to Spanish-speaking students. If you would like to explore this opportunity, [email GLO director Jim Tino](#).



Together before the Throne



* Lord of the Harvest, we ask your presence and **blessing on all churches everywhere** who gather to praise and worship You for your victory over sin, death, and the devil by your passion, crucifixion, and resurrection!

* Be especially present this Easter at **Faith Lutheran in Hialeah, Florida** - a small congregation struggling to survive in the center of Miami - and with all congregations who have fallen on hard times. Grant them joyful hearts, faithful leaders, and sufficient resources.

* Look with favor on all **our GLO missionaries as they seek to proclaim the crucified and risen Lord** to people who are indifferent, uninformed, and otherwise distanced from the Gospel. Send more Lutherans with willing hearts to serve cross-culturally. You have placed your gifts in your children.

* **Go with our missionaries who are deploying** to their fields of service this April: **Heather and Nathan Pittman** (and family) deploying this month as missionaries from the **USA to Kenya**; and **Victor and Belén Rivas** and family, returning to service in **Guyana from Guatemala**. Keep them safe from anything that would distract, disturb, or otherwise hinder them as they seek to serve You in the calling that You have given them. Encourage their fellow **Guatemalans to support the Rivas'** in prayers and offerings so that Your name is made known throughout the world.

* **Thank you for a successful surgery for missionary Tim H.** (Guinea)! Keep him in good health, Lord, as he and Beth continue to share the Bible with those around them in word and action. May these Gospel seeds give fruit as **others** share what **they hear** with their neighbors. We pray also for GLO missionary **Amos Otula (Kenya)**, currently receiving treatments for cancer. Heal Amos of the cancer, Lord.

* **Thank you, Lord**, for your travelling mercies as You have granted safe furlough travel for **Ben, Scarlett, and Jaakko Tino** as they returned to Guatemala to resume their ministries in Zacapa. Also, praise God that **Scarlett received her US green card!** Bless and guide their next steps!

* Good Shepherd, we praise You for the work of pastors on the mission field to guide new believers in the faith. Bless Pastor **Adrian & Cruz Maria Ventura** as they focus on **family visits in Santiago, Chile**. Strengthen the young couples and new families as they build their homes on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

* Bless the **Lutheran church of Chile** as it continues to respond to the needs of many people who lost their homes in recent **wildfires** in Valparaiso and Viña del Mar. **May true Hope in Jesus** be the message that accompanies all the activities to give physical aide.

* With **David & Luz Maria Ernst of Barinas, Venezuela**, we **thank God for ministries such as LeadaChild**. May God continue to be glorified through the many **scholarship recipients** who not only excel academically, but also grow in their faith. We praise Him for the opportunities these students have to **give witness to their faith** as they compete in state and national competitions.

* Father, go with **GLO director Rev. Jim Tino** as he travels to **Bolivia** this month to strategize, support and encourage the Lutheran Church in Bolivia (ICEL) to send one of their own as a domestic missionary to plant a new church in Tarija, Bolivia. Bless Bolivian missionaries **Rev. Osmel Soliz and wife Yolanda** as they seek to share Jesus with others!

We join **Shary Frahm**, missionary in Cambodia, in praising God for the humble service of Pastor Ravy at Lutheran Hope Church in Siem Reep.

Lord of the Harvest, **bless the efforts to reach more Cambodians** through the "Light of Life" evangelistic program.

Rise above!

Through your prayers and your gifts, you are a key part of the Global Lutheran Outreach family! Your gift to the General Fund supports all GLO missionaries. Or, designate your gift to the missionary of your choice. [Click here](#).



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