



Zion's News

Gathered by God's grace, we are empowered to serve and sent to share Christ's love.



Pastor Caitlin Kurtz

October 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our sermon series for the past several weeks has focused on lessons taught by the early Christian church in the book of Acts, and how they inform our Purpose and Guiding Principles, which are:

Purpose: Gathered by God's grace, we are empowered to serve and sent to share Christ's love.

Guiding Principles: We relate to our community. We are grounded in faith practices. We invite people to join in God's work for the sake of the world, in whatever way they can.

It's been energizing to take a step back from the day to day tasks of ministry to look at the bigger picture of what the Church is, and why we (the congregation of Zion's, and the church universal) exist at all. These stories from scripture, and the hard discernment work our Council has done, remind us that the Church exists for the purpose of sharing the Good News of Jesus, and blessing the world as we ourselves are first blessed in and through Jesus. While I *hope* these purposes are behind everything we do as a congregation, and as individuals, the fact of the matter is, sometimes we 'can't see the forest for the trees' so, from time to time, it's good for us to refocus and recommit to the work God is calling us to do.



August's Back to School Blessings event was a beautiful embodiment of our Purpose and Guiding Principles. This event took many, many hours to put together. Monica, Deb, Jim and Laurie, provided countless hours of behind the scenes shopping and counting and sorting, and men and women from our congregation and community came together on Saturday and Sunday for final preparations and the event itself. The Holy Spirit *gathered* these hands together and *empowered* us to serve our neighbors. The idea of this event *came out* of our relationships with our neighbors, and directly benefited our neighbors: we learned of the need for school clothes and supplies through our relationships at Jonestown Elementary, and worked with

our partners there to bring it to fruition. *God worked through us to provide 65 students with new clothes, new shoes, new socks and underwear, haircuts, gently used clothes, and school supplies.* How awesome is that??

While this year's event was largely made possible, financially, by a generous Thrivent grant, next year's event will need a different funding source. Council voted last week to designate ALL the proceeds for this year's Theme Basket Raffle Auction to help fund the 2020 Back to School Blessings Event. Spread the word!



THANK YOU for all the ways you respond to the Holy Spirit's work in your life, and in our congregation. We are richly blessed with time, talent, and financial resources that God has entrusted to our care and calls us to use for the sake of a world in need. I am grateful for the ways you share your time, skills, passions, and money at Zion's, and grateful for the difference God is making in our community and world through our hands. For those who haven't yet found a way to share your skills or passion or time at Zion's, I would love to talk with you. God has gifted each and every person, and there is a way for you to serve here! Together, by the guidance of the Spirit, I believe we can figure out what that way is. It takes many hands to do ministry, and we'd love to include you in the count! Please know my door is always open.

With gratitude, and in hope,

Pastor Caitlin

Christian Education

Chair: Michele McQuaide(michelemcquaide@rocketmail.com;330-958-3399)

ALL CHURCH - WHOLE-LIFE FAITH

October 13- 9:15-10:10 AM

An event for all ages, followed by snacks, held in the social hall. Everyone is welcome! **Please bring your cell phone/laptop/tablet, if you are able. It will be interactive, electronic, and fun.**

10:30 AM Worship in Sanctuary



Attention Sunday School Teachers and Helpers or anyone interested in teaching or helping with Sunday School: Sign ups are posted in the Level 2 classroom. If you did not teach or help with Sunday School in the past, please get in touch with Michele McQuaide for details. We welcome your gifts and talents and appreciate your willingness to share them with the children of Zion's!



Lunch Bunch will be held on Thursday, October 24 at 12:30 pm at the Swatara Coffee Company. We'll be discussing "The Beast" and "Resistance Stories" from Rachel Held Evans "Inspired". All are welcome!

Women's Bible study will be held at 7:00 pm, on Thursday, October 24 at Elaine Ludwig's home. We'll also be discussing "The Beast" and "Resistance Stories" from Rachel Held Evans "Inspired".



"Wise" guys: Men's Bible study will be held on October 12 at 8:00 a.m. in Zion's social hall. All men of the congregation are invited to join us for a morning of fellowship and learning, as well as some sweet goodies!



Youth Group

Leaders: Pastor Caitlin and Joanna Guldin-Noll

pastorckurtz@gmail.com

joanna.guldin@gmail.com



Youth Groupers and Families:

Get these Youth Group events on your calendar:

October 20: Lunch & Info Meeting on Youth Gathering, Hike Gold Mine (Parents/guardians are requested to attend the info meeting and are invited to the hike!)

November 10: Youth-led Sunday & After-Church Lunch and Bible Study

We'll share more details through our email list. If you have any questions or aren't getting Youth Group emails and want to, contact Joanna Guldin-Noll at joanna.guldin@gmail.com, 717-228-9846, or at church!

Congregational Care Team (formerly called Social Ministry)

Chair: Sharon Davis (dsdavis11@comcast.net; 865-2781)

Spang Crest News

The Congregational Care Team will host a birthday party for the October Birthday residents at Spang Crest on Tues. Oct. 15 at 2:00pm.

Wishing Godspeed to our college students, military, and missionary as they begin a new year of studies and adventures.

Jacob Beidler (Lebanon Valley)

7 Circle Dr.
Fredericksburg, PA 17026

Rebecca Boisvert (Bloomsburg U.)

311 Montgomery Apartment
525 E. Second St.
Box 6043
Bloomsburg, PA 17815-1906

Dylan Houser (Lebanon Valley)

11 Pheasant Dr.
Lebanon, PA 17046

Riley Houser (Lebanon Valley)

11 Pheasant Dr.
Lebanon, PA 17046

Kim Imler (HACC)

701 Maple St.
Lebanon, PA 17046

Kylee Moyers (Central Penn College)

10387 Jonestown, Rd.
Annville, PA 17003

Victoria Moyers (Mansfield U.)

64 Morris Dr. #239
Mansfield, PA 16933

Donny Redinger (HACC)

1765 Quarry Rd.
Lebanon, PA 17046

Beth Rose Schindler (Lebanon Valley)

38 Treeline Ave.
Fredericksburg, PA 17026

Seminarian:

Michael Johnsen (Gettysburg Seminary)

347 Swatara Creek Dr.
PO Box 93
Jonestown, PA 17038

Military:

Eric Schulden (Afghanistan)
(Address not available to date)

Missionary: Cassandra Singh-Hueter
(Info not available to date)

Our very own Joe Northridge is being recognized by DDS and the Work With Us Coalition

as an individual who excels as an employee working to his full potential. I don't have all the specific details, but on Thursday October 17th, at Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lebanon, PA (119 N. 8th St.), at around 10am -ish, Joe and his job coach will be on stage on a panel discussing his employment and his successes. This is followed by a luncheon.

I'm sure you all join me in congratulating Joe for working hard, displaying determination and showing perseverance. He puts in four days a week at the mall maintaining a safe and clean environment.

Every year Work with Us hosts a banquet to honor local employees who excel at promoting their full potential. Work With Us also recognizes employers who have displayed impeccable support to all employees regardless of disability. Award recipients embody the spirit of advocacy as they develop their efforts to employ persons with disabilities and making the challenge of working with a disability much easier.

I don't know how often Joe checks email, but I am sure he would love to receive a text message congratulating him. His cell is (717) 673-3914. I talked to him earlier today and he was pretty excited. **-JOSH NORTHRIDGE**

COUNCIL

Next Meeting: Oct. 10, 2019

7:00 pm

President: Larry Houser (lhouser1@gmail.com; 717-865-6693)

Council Highlights from September 2019 meeting

- Council spent some time discussing our current deficit, and made plans for a newsletter article, which can be found in this newsletter.
- It was discussed and moved that Council needs to approve all fundraisers held at Zion's, and their beneficiaries. Council then approved that money raised from the Theme Basket Raffle Auction on October 6 be used for the 2020 Back to School Blessings event. Council also approved that funds raised at Koinonia's Hollyberry Bazaar will benefit Koinonia, and a Youth Group fundraiser to sell t-shirts and mugs with our new logo on them, to benefit the Youth Group. Any person or group may submit a fundraiser request to Council, with beneficiaries delineated for approval.
- Council approved Mike Long's development of a safer, more secure mechanism to fasten the candle holders to the pews during Christmas Eve worship services.
- With the guidance of Jim Gill, Stewardship Chairperson, Council had a healthy discussion about understanding stewardship and what it means to live it out. We hope to continue these conversations while brainstorming ideas on educating and encouraging stewardship in our congregation and beyond.

Your Council members are: Larry Houser, President; Terry Ludwig, Vice President; Kelly Rittle, Secretary; Cathy Houser, Treasurer; Brian Adams; Joanna Guldin-Noll; Christine Techky; Tracy Hoy; Noel Strattan; Deb Reiner; Kerri Price; Matt Wolfe; Linda Wenrich, and Pr. Caitlin Kurtz

KOINONIA CLASS

Next meeting: Sat., Nov. 9, 6:30 pm @ church

President: Karen Hitz (rnkhitz@gmail.com, 717-272-9520)

Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Sat. Nov. 9 at 6:30pm at the church .

Activity: Zion's Annual Hollyberry Bazaar will be held on Sat. Nov. 2 from 8:00am – 2:00pm. If you would like to help in any way, please contact Karen Hitz at 717-272-9520. Food items, crafts, theme baskets, are all needed. All money raised is gifted back to the church. Thank-you for all of your support in the past. Contact the following people if you would like to contribute:

Kitchen – Karen Hitz rnkhitz@gmail.com (717-272-9520)

Cookies,baked goods – Sharon Davis dsdavis11@comcast.net (717-865-2781)

Candy – Blanche Sebastian – (717-865-3336)

Plants – Linda Toth lmtoth@comcast.net (717-865-6333)

Used Books – Jean Fowler jjbfowler@comcast.net (717-926-1240)

This and That – Janet Bird jbird75@comcast.net (717-865-5636)

Theme Baskets, wrapping – Georgetta Wolfe (717-865-3884)

Raffle Baskets – Janet Bird jbird75@comcast.net (717-865-5636)

Arts and Crafts – Sharon Houser slhouser00@gmail.com (717-376-5010)

Note: You will find a book bin in the Social Hall beginning in September to collect donations of used books.



This and That Table

There will again be a This and That table at the Hollyberry Bazaar. All items are sold below retail price. (5 cents to \$2.00) Children and adults shop at this table. Donations are welcome and do not have to be just Christmas-related. Suggestions: small toys/dolls/balls, activity books, knick knacks, stationery items, children's jewelry, puzzles/ games, new stuffed animals. There is a red collection bin in the north lower level entrance.

Items may also be left in the kitchen, but be sure to label them for the This and That table. If you have questions contact Janet Bird at jbird75@comcast.net.

Baskets

Basket donations are greatly appreciated. The baskets of higher value will be placed on the stage for the raffle. Wrapping the baskets is optional.

Fall Financial Update

At Zion’s, we believe that all that we have is a gift from God, who has entrusted money, time, talent, and relationship into our care. God calls us to share what God has entrusted into our care for the building up of God’s Kingdom on earth. We do that, in part, by giving to Zion’s. Your financial gifts support the ministry that is done within this place and helps to care for the building that houses many of those ministries. **We are grateful for your financial support.**

At the end of August, our year-to-date expenses are above our year-to-date income, which means we’re running a deficit. This is true even though giving for the first eight months of the year has been greater than for the first eight months of last year, and it is true even though our expenses are still \$20,000 below budget. We have had significant building expenses this year—A/C repairs in the sanctuary, replacing smoke detectors throughout the building, and the property insurance deductible due to the heating pipe leak outside the Church Office. As our building continues to age, we unfortunately expect that there will be more and more needed repairs. While the church is not the building (the church is the people!), our building makes many of our ministries possible, and provides a safe and comfortable place for us, and visitors to worship and gather each week. We are asking for your continued financial support, in weekly giving, and, as you are able, a special gift to offset our current deficit. Again, we are grateful for your support, and for the work that God is doing in and through our congregation.

	Jan to Aug Income	Jan to Aug Expense	Jan to Aug Budget
General Fund	\$106,874.05	\$120,907.15	\$140, 450
Property Fund (used to pay for things like heating oil, electric, lawn care... anything related to our building and grounds. This is not actually a separate fund of money, but a line item that some people choose to give to).	\$4,506.50	\$4,506.50	<i>Budgeted property expenses Jan-August are \$24,233, which is included above.</i>



ELECTRONIC GIVING

Did you know you can sign up to give money to the church automatically? And easily change the amount or frequency of your gift? Much like you do when you sign up to automatically pay your cable bill, or car insurance, or put money into your retirement fund?

We use a program called **Simply Giving** to make this possible. Simply Giving is facilitated by Thrivent, but you do not need to be a Thrivent member to use it! **Simply Giving** simplifies your life as a giver, knowing that wherever you travel, or miss church due to illness or conflict, your contribution still comes to the church. It also builds your faith by facilitating “first fruits” giving—asking you to commit (though it’s super easy to change) to a certain amount of financial contribution, rather than give to God what’s leftover at the end of the month. **Simply Giving** also helps Zion’s by reducing our envelope costs, and providing a steady stream of income, even over the summer or winter weather months.

Want to learn more? Speak with Pastor Caitlin, Cathy Houser, or Jim Gill. There are sign up forms on the bulletin board outside the church office. Once you sign up, you’ll receive your own log-in so you can change your contribution whenever you want.

Worship

Chair: Noel Strattan (dns@telecommute.net; 865-7747)

Wednesday's At Zions

Dinner at 5:30pm, Worship at 6:15pm, and Kings Kids/Bible Study/Youth Choir at 6:50 pm, Adult Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm.

Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Rejoicing  **Spirits**

Please consider sharing your talents with Kings Kids this year! We would love to learn more about sewing, wood-working, painting, and baking! If interested, please contact Monica Bortz (zionswednesdays@gmail.com)

Worship Notes and Changes

Communion Bread Update: For several years, we have used gluten free communion bread for the entire congregation. We tried a number of different loaves and brands to find one that worked well enough for our congregation. However, each week, a lot of bread from the sliced loaf is left over. The bread doesn't hold together (on the counter or in the freezer) well enough to be used the following week, so we were discarding a lot of bread each week, which isn't wise stewardship of food, or money. Because of this, we are returning to standard (gluten containing) bread for the congregation, with gluten free wafers available for those who need that accommodation. When intinction is used, the whole congregation will receive gluten free wafers to avoid cross-contamination.



Nursery Update: For at least the past year, we have been unable to get two adults (required by our Child Protection Policy) to serve in the nursery each week. We tried to hire a nursery attendant to fill one of these slots, but no suitable applicant was found. Due to these realities, and to the fact that many families choose to have their children with them in worship (which we fully support and welcome), we are not offering a staffed nursery at this point in time. We have created a "Break Space" in the Gathering Area, near the TV, to be used by young children and their parents when and if they need a break from worship. There are some quiet toys there for your use. We hope this will be a suitable alternative, and if you have other ideas, please speak with Pastor Caitlin.



Christmas Eve Worship: We would like to offer a third worship option on Christmas Eve, earlier in the afternoon. The time has yet to be determined, but noon, 2 PM, and 4 PM have all been suggested. If you think this is a service you or your family is likely to attend, please speak with Pastor Caitlin. We'll need a few worship leaders to make it happen, and are seeking your input on time.



COLLEGE PLANNING STRATEGIES WORKSHOP



Workshop is for all 10th and 11th graders and their parents. Jim Gill from Thrivent Financial is hosting two free sessions to help you understand FAFSA, maximize financial aid, minimize student loan debt, and more. These popular seminars will be held Tuesday October 22 at Lebanon Area Evangelical Free Church and Wednesday October 23 at Annville-Cleona High School. Both sessions begin with dinner at 6:30pm and the workshop will run until 8:30pm. RSVP to Jim Gill at 717-867-1500 or jim.gill@thrivent.com.

Zion's Themed Basket Auction

Sunday, October 6th (formerly Basket Bash)

Doors open at noon. Auction begins at 2:00pm.



Theme Basket Raffle-Auction – Sunday, October 6th: All proceeds support our 2020 Back to School Blessings Event .

Consider your Christmas shopping! Baskets are full of themes from Teacher Gifts, to kids baskets, to Family Sporting Events, to Friends, to Baking, to Guys, to Cleaning, to Relaxing, you name it! Walk around the tables full of gorgeous baskets and put your tickets toward the baskets that you hope to win.

Tickets and shopping will be available before (10:00-10:20) and after church. If you can't be present for the drawings at 2 p.m., no worries. Just let one of the staff know and we'll arrange to have someone collect your winnings for you. Oh, and lunch will be available too.

Really, the baskets are gorgeous! And, if you're worshipping anyway, why not stay for a little lunch and basket-shopping. And don't forget to invite your friends. Hope you'll come!

Update for the 2020 Father's Day weekend shore trip

The Roman Holiday is offering us an opportunity to put down a \$100 deposit NOW to hold a room for 2020. Currently there are many 1-bedroom efficiency suite rooms. Hopefully this will make it possible for all of us from Zion's to again be able to stay at the same hotel. The \$100 deposit is refundable but only before March 1, 2020.

On March 1, 2020 a 35% deposit will be requested. Contact the hotel at that time to determine that amount.

At this point the best way to get on the reservation list is to call the Roman Holiday directly (609) 522-3111.

Please be sure to mention that you are part of the Zion's Lutheran, Jonestown, PA group.

During that call you may pay your \$100 deposit by credit card.

Following the call, if you wish to pay the \$100 deposit by check mail it to

Roman Holiday Motel
1000 (10th) JFK Boulevard
North Wildwood, NJ 08260

Hotel Details: \$147: 1- Bedroom Efficiency Suite (sleeps 6/limit 6) This rate is a \$17 increase from the 2019 rate.

Sales & occupancy taxes are 13.625%. There are no extra charges for additional persons –within occupancy limit.

Any families staying Thursday or Sunday Nights receive a \$25.00 discount for each night (does not include Friday or Saturday night). The discounts will be given upon check in or when paying the balance. The Thursday or Sunday discount was \$15.00 this year. Contact person is Janet Bird jbird75@comcast.net.



Zion's College Students:

If you haven't already, please give your college address to the church office (zions@comcast.net), so that we can stay in touch and provide care packages throughout the school year.

Mission Ministry, (formerly Evangelism)

Chair: Elaine Ludwig (eludadvo@comcast.net; 865-3757)

Lebanon County Christian Ministries

(LCCM) Wish List:

TOILET PAPER, LAUNDRY DETERGENT, TISSUES, MEN'S DEODORANT.

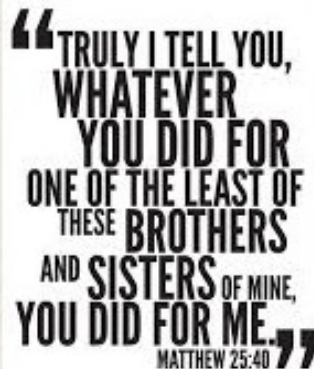
Sugar, Flour, Pancake Syrup, Salad Dressing.

ALL SIZES: MEN'S BOXERS, BRAS, SPORTS BRAS, BOY'S BOXERS.

TWIN SHEET SETS, QUEEN BLANKETS, KING BLANKETS

Place contributions in the container marked

"LCCM" in social hall. **(Watch expirations)**



Jonestown Outreach pantrY (JOY)

Wish List:

Cereal, Canned Fruits, Especially Canned Peaches & Pineapples, Canned Meats, Canned vegetables, Especially Mixed Veggies, Noodles, Beef Stew, All Stews, Spam, Pancake Mix, Kidney & Lima Beans, Toilet Paper, Laundry Detergent, Diapers sz. 4-5

Place contributions in the container marked

"JOY" in social hall. **(Watch expirations)**

HOMELESS BLESSING BAGS

Have you ever passed a homeless person and felt compassion for them but did not know how to respond? Some folks on our Mission Ministry Team had this happen to them so we decided to respond as Jesus taught us in the story of the Good Samaritan. We found an idea to help folks do this. A Homeless Blessing Bag is an item folks can keep in their cars or backpacks to give to a homeless person you see while visiting or traveling through a neighborhood. The bags will be available to anyone who thinks they may want to be prepared to help the homeless. We will also have information available for folks who may want to make their own blessing bags.



A picture of my host parents picking me up from our retreat center and serving me mate (pronounced mah-tay - similar to tea, but the straw strains the leaves as you drink. It's very common in Argentina and Uruguay) - Cassandra SinghHeuter, (our Young Adult in Global Mission missionary


You can find her latest newsletter on the large bulletin board in the gathering area!!

Hospital Admissions

Please inform the church office when you or a loved one becomes a patient in the hospital or other health care facility, or if there are changes in your health status. The federal HIPPA regulations do not permit health care providers to release personal information such as this without your expressed permission. Not all health care facilities have chaplains on staff to contact us about your admission. A phone call to the church office at 717-865-2848, will help us to respond to you with pastoral care for a time of change in your life.

† MEMORIAL FUND †

In Memory of Catherine Freeman
James and Brenda Bomberger
Freeman Funeral Quartet & Organist
George and Jean Hurst

SUNDAY	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Bulletin deadline is every Tuesday		1	2 5:30 Family meal 6:15 REJOICING SPIRITS 6:50 Bible Study/Kings Kids/Youth Choir 7:30 Adult Choir	3 6:00 pm Mutual Ministry mtg	4	5
6 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Noon- Basket Raffle-Auction	7	8	9 5:30 Family meal 6:15 REJOICING SPIRITS 6:50 Bible Study/Kings Kids/Youth Choir 7:30 Adult Choir	10 7:00 pm Council	11	12 8:00 am Men's Bible study
13 9:15 ALL CHURCH event 10:30 Worship	14 7:00 pm Worship/ Music mtg	15 2:00 pm Spang Crest B-day party 6:30 pm Christian Ed mtg	16 5:30 Family meal 6:15 REJOICING SPIRITS 6:50 Bible Study/Kings Kids/Youth Choir 7:30 Adult Choir	17 10:00 am Joe Northridge presentation @ Salem Luth.	18	19
20 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship Youth Group event	21	22 November NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	23 5:30 Family meal 6:15 REJOICING SPIRITS 6:50 Bible Study/Kings Kids/Youth Choir 7:30 Adult Choir	24 12:30 Lunch Bunch 7:00 pm Women's Bible Study	25	26
27 Reformation Sunday 9:15 Sunday School 10:30 Worship	28	29	30 9:00 Sewing 5:30 Family meal 6:15 REJOICING SPIRITS 6:50 Bible Study/Kings Kids/Youth Choir 7:30 Adult Choir	31 		

Zion's Themed Basket Auction

Sunday, October 6th
(formerly Basket Bash)



Doors open at noon. Auction begins at 2:00.

Zion's Annual Hollyberry Bazaar

Saturday November 2nd
8:00am – 2:00pm



Worship Participants for October

	Lectors	Crucifer	Children's Sermon	Acolytes	Counters	Prayers of the People	Communion Assts.	Altar Guild
6	John Mohn Jr.	MacKenzie Hess	Terry Ludwig	Mason & Logan Livingston	Larry & Sharon Houser	Christine Techky	John Mohn Jr. Linda Toth	Bucks family
13	Deb Reiner	Gavin Bush	Laurie Gill	Madison Hess Daryl Root	Kerri Price	Laurie Gill	Deb Long Terry Ludwig	Bucks family
20	Jamie Strubhar	Brian Adams	Linda Toth	Zoe Menzel MacKenzie Hess	Deb Reiner	Dr. Richard Koons	Deb Long Terry Ludwig	Bortz family
27	Noel Strattan	Daryl Hess	Pastor Caitlin	Levi & Gracie Bucks	Kelly Rittle Deb Long	Seth Kurtz	Pam Bixler Noel Strattan	Bortz family
Ushers						Getting to know you time		
Jack Beidler, Darryl Bush, John Mohn Jr.						Congregational Care Committee		

Newsletter #1

Cassandra Singh-Hueter

September 16, 2019

Welcome to my newsletter! To follow my adventures, you can also visit yagmyearcassandra.wordpress.com. Thanks!

DEVOTION

Isaiah 41: 9-10

⁹ I took you from the ends of the earth,

from its farthest corners I called you.

I said, 'You are my servant';

I have chosen you and have not rejected you.

¹⁰ So do not fear, for I am with you;

do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you;

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.



Dear friends,

I think this applies to each of us in a different way. God has called each of us, including you and me, from the farthest corners to be a servant. The service may look different for each person, but we have been chosen. And the fear also may look different. Fear doesn't just apply to traveling to a new country to serve. Fear can also be found in daily tasks. And God says, do not fear, because I am with you. That's easier said than done, but it's comforting to know.

I hope you and I both go through today a little brighter with that knowledge.

Vaya con Dios (Go with God)



A picture of my host parents picking me up from our retreat center and serving me mate (pronounced mah-tay - similar to tea, but the straw strains the leaves as you drink. It's very common in Argentina and Uruguay)

“¿Quién sos vos?” That means “Who are you?” in Castellano, the version of Spanish that is spoken in Argentina. This question was used in a skit during one of our orientation sessions. That question really stuck out to me: Who am I?

Identity, or who I am, was a main theme of our orientation in Chicago and that in Buenos Aires. We talked about identity in different social contexts, and what makes up a person’s identity. I think it is interesting and important to learn about that before beginning a journey such as this YAGM year. I hope and pray that my identity changes in a good way based on what I experience this year. I know that at times, it will be difficult and challenging, but those difficulties will make the positive experiences that much more beautiful.

So who am I? First and foremost, I am a child of God. It's been difficult for me to summarize who I am because I'm still discovering my

identity. I know that living in a different country for a year will definitely help me learn more about myself. I will learn a lot more about what is comfortable for me and what pushes me out of my comfort zone. I will learn about compromises I am willing to make and values that are core to who I am.

I am currently a work in progress.

I will come back to this question in the middle of the year and again at the end of the year in order to see how my answers develop.

Blessings,
Cassandra



The pianist introduced herself to me and then asked if I played any instruments. I told her I sang, so she had me practice with the other singers :)

SHOUTOUTS

This isn't a complete list, so I want to thank everyone for all the support and kindness you've shown me.

Shoutout to...

- My parents for supporting me and encouraging me as I prepared for this journey
- Friends and mentors who helped me along the way
- People in my various faith communities who have supported me and asked me how they can pray for me
- Anyone who has supported YAGM through donations
- Global Mission for all the preparation and putting together an awesome orientation
- Everyone I talked to at orientation - everyone had such great energy and enthusiasm, but also a willingness to have deep conversations
- My traveling community - those who are also serving in Argentina and Uruguay; we have an amazing and enthusiastic group
- My receiving community - everyone has been so kind to me and so generous in hospitality
- **You, the reader, for accompanying me on this journey!**

Featured Section: Plaza de Mayo

In each newsletter, this section will be for talking about something that I did that wasn't part of my daily routine, or something that stuck out to me.

During orientation, we went to ex-ESMA. ESMA was the name of a military school that existed in Buenos Aires and was very prominent during the dictatorship from 1976 to 1983. The military wasn't obligated to say anything, and when they did leave the premises, they took away as much evidence as possible. What we saw at the ex-ESMA site was information obtained through testimonies of the survivors of the disappeared. The disappeared were those who had been 'removed' from society by the military, and mostly were the people trying to speak out against the military. We also watched videos of the children of the disappeared, adopted by military families, and how realizing they grew up with a false identity had impacted them.

Once people started to realize that many were being 'disappeared', their mothers and grandmothers (abuelas) joined together to do something about it. They walked in circles around Plaza de Mayo (the plaza in front of the Casa Rosada, the Government House of Argentina) to protest this injustice. They could not stay still and protest or else they would be arrested. I can't even imagine how much courage it took to protest, knowing how dangerous it was to speak out during that time. The love these abuelas showed was so much stronger than any fear they had, and I truly admire that love and loyalty.



A photo of the abuelas and community members protesting

I'm really grateful that we were given the opportunity to visit ex-ESMA and the Plaza de Mayo to watch the abuelas and community members walk around the Plaza. There still are abuelas who have not been reunited with their disappeared children or grandchildren, and there are many families who have only recently been reunited. These events are still very relevant and impactful for many families. I'm glad that we had the chance to understand this before joining our communities of service, and to realize that this might impact how people react to different situations and to be sensitive to these reactions. It also helped to remind me once again that people come from different backgrounds and situations, and that I should be quick to listen and slow to judge, and I hope to carry that reminder with me throughout the year.

**“Our fight has no expiration date” →
“Memory, truth, justice”**



PRAYER REQUESTS

- For all the other YAGM's as they adjust to living in their new country
- For the hosts of the communities where YAGM's are being received
- For communities that sent YAGM's to their new country of service
- **For anyone else not yet mentioned**

If in the future, you have anyone you would like to be added to the list, please send your prayer request, and I will add it to the next newsletter I send.



This is a bookstore in Buenos Aires called El Ateneo Grand Splendid. It used to be a theater. It was absolutely beautiful and I cannot wait to return there.

Thank you so much for reading my newsletter!

To support YAGM, you can visit bit.ly/YAGM-Cassandra