

HISPANIC OUTREACH IN SIOUXLAND

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“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not appoint me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other” John 15:15-17.

In Latin America many countries celebrate Valentine’s Day in February, but some change the name to the “Day of Friendship” or the “Day of Love.” It is good to celebrate friendship and love because we have such a lack of them in our world. Our sinful nature inhibits us from being true friends and from showing true love. By nature we are selfish and self-centered. That is why friendships may only last a short time. When one does not receive any more benefit from the relationship, one goes on to make “friends” with someone else. Also the word “love” for many refers to self-satisfaction. One loves something or someone because it makes him or her feel good. The breakdown of families and marriages in Latin America and the world give evidence to the sin that lies within us and our inability to truly love and befriend one another.

For this reason Jesus came and became a true Friend to us and showed us true love. He gave of Himself unselfishly and made the sacrifice to free us from the condemnation for our self-centeredness. He frees us to be able to love and befriend others. He fills us with His love to bear the fruit of love towards all people. This was neither our idea nor our plan, but the Father proposed it before the beginning of time and made His plan a reality through Christ. We have been loved and befriended in Christ. Let us celebrate the day of friendship and love everyday as we reach out to those around us.

We continue to reach out through the ESL programs. We began a new session the second week of January and are thankful for the students who have braved the weather and come to class. Likewise we give thanks to the members who volunteer to teach and befriend these students and their children. Please pray to the Father that we may continue faithfully in this work to bring His love to others.

I was able to preach in four churches during the last month proclaiming our Saviors love in addition to our weekly proclamation in Spanish at St. Paul. We hope to begin a similar activity at Hope in South Sioux. We also have two ESL students studying the catechism learning of our Father's love. As a member of the Personal Missions Committee, I also have the opportunity to meet with others and discuss how we can better tell of and show the love of Christ to those around us. We are planning to have four workshops in February, where we can share with the members of Iowa District West different ideas to on how to better proclaim the love of Christ in Word and deed. Information about these workshops has been sent to every congregation and we look forward to serving you.