



!AMIGOS EN CRISTO!

News from IDW Hispanic Ministry in Denison and Storm Lake
Missionary/Pastor Daniel Vogel

Iowa District
West, LCMS

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“THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD”

The celebration of the Presentation of the Lord and the Purification of Mary takes place 40 days after the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:22). We have had a celebration each year even though it falls in the Epiphany season. It gives us a wonderful opportunity to share the Biblical teachings about Mary, about Baptism, and the life and ministry of Jesus. In the picture below I used the opportunity to also teach the children of Jesus' presentation and to remind them that they too have been



presented to the Lord through Holy Baptism. I am holding a 3 week old baby girl, Andrea, who we hope will soon be baptized and truly presented to the Lord. Our ministry tries to focus on teaching the children through Sunday School and weekly Family Night on Thursdays. We also have started a children's bell choir. Following this special service our tradition is to have a dinner with tamales and a special chocolate/corn drink. With our Denison service starting at 12:45 pm each Sunday followed by Sunday School at 1:30 pm, followed by a class preparing interested Hispanics to take the Citizenship test at 2:30 pm, it makes for a busy afternoon. I am so grateful that we have seen so much faithfulness in our families. Most importantly they are bringing their friends, like baby Andrea and family. Our goal for Sunday attendance this year is 40 and in the first 3 Sundays of February we have averaged 44 in attendance.

BIBLE STUDY BEGINS IN CARROLL

Through our English class in Carroll we have started our first Bible Study at St. Paul's. We have three young men, Walter, Jelson, and Jerry who are eager to study the Bible and are not shy about asking questions. The men are from El Salvador and Guatemala and all have mostly participated in Pentecostal churches in their countries. I met them through our contacts with starting the ESL (English as a Second Language) class that we hold at St. Paul's twice a week. The class is taught by Dani Dreyden with the help of her mother, Jackie, and other St. Paul volunteers. From the beginning of the first English class both Walter and Jerry were interested in the church and our teachings and so it gave me a great opportunity



to share the Gospel with them and to introduce to them our faith. Our first class was an introductory class on the Lutheran church and its teachings and its relationship to Martin Luther and the Bible. Most Hispanics are not familiar with the Lutheran church, but they have heard something about Martin Luther, usually negative. Jerry (he works at Farmland in Carroll) has been very good at bringing other friends to our English class and we hope they will also attend the Bible study. Walter and Jelson work at the new Hispanic restaurant 'Las Americas' and also have many friends in the community. Carroll has a small population of Hispanic families, but as I am learning, it is growing and they are eager to learn English. They are also concerned about their religious life, and so I think there is a growing need for a Hispanic outreach in the community. Please pray for this new study, and that our new friends will also join our worship in Denison.



SETTING NEW GOALS FOR 2009

Our two congregations in Storm Lake and Denison are busy setting goals for ministry in 2009. With the help of our new District Mission Executive, Mark Gerken, we are evaluating our ministries and challenging ourselves to grow in faith and outreach. Our new Mission Statement is simple and yet challenges us in many areas: ***“With the help of the Lord we desire to serve with joy the Hispanic communities of Storm Lake and Denison with the Gospel of the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.”*** And so our folks are committing themselves to our main goal of growing in the understanding of God’s Word for our lives, of faithful worship together, and of outreach in creative ways to serve the Hispanic immigrant communities and their many needs. In the photo above our Storm Lake group is busy discussing our plans. Some of those present were, from left, Danny, Humberto, myself, Rodolfo and Loli. This is the first time we have tried to develop specific goals and strategies with our members. It has been a good experience for our members to see their part in providing leadership for the future of our ministry. As a part of this study we will elect congregational leaders. Please pray for our new year!

CHAPLAINCY AT THE TYSON BEEF PLANT IN DENISON: It’s been a month of counseling at the plant. I am pleased that more and more of the workers, from management to the hourly workers, see the need to seek out help for personal problems that may be affecting their work and their home life. In one case however the worker needed a little help to see his problem. He was called into the Personnel Office because he had lost his temper over a work issue. Such behavior normally would cost him his job and almost did. To save it he was required to visit with me. We spent about 4 sessions together during his work days talking about his frustrations and life choices that have led to problems at work. At the final session he confessed that he was glad that he had been required to talk with me even though in the beginning he thought it would be a waste of time to talk to a pastor. I now regularly check on him and he has turned his life around. He (and his supervisor) are pleased with his change. Instead of a frustrated worker his is productive and happy.

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**Ministry
Prayers**

PLEASE PRAY: + For our new Carroll Bible class and our contacts for outreach there. + In Thanksgiving for a great start to 2009 in Denison with Sunday attendances in the 40s, and for the new contacts there. + For new contacts, Sergio and Cali and others in Storm Lake. + For our goals for the new year in Denison and Storm Lake and for our new leaders who will be elected. + For our upcoming annual Pancake Supper at Our Savior in Denison. + In thanksgiving for the many individuals, congregations and Circuits of the Iowa District West who are so supportive of this ministry and see the need to reach out to their own communities.