

ALAMOSA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEWS

December 31, 2010

Dear Friends in Christ,

The old year is ending and a new one beginning. May 2011 be a year of great blessings to this congregation and to each of you and your families. The year 2010 has been a momentous one and December was no exception. In people news...



Christmas with our boys at the hospital

People

The **Griffis** family's month did not go quite as planned. After writing on December 8 that Eric and I hoped to be back home the following week, he came down with pneumonia and landed back in ICU. He is still at Memorial Hospital (now in the rehab unit) and we are hoping, once again, that he will be discharged next week. Our boys flew in from Washington and Minnesota for a Christmas week with us at Eric's sister's and at the hospital. Thank you for your calls, e-mails and prayers, and thank you, Ted and Kay, for your visit. Most of all, thank you all for carrying on so beautifully while I have been away. It has been hard to abandon you as I have done and I look forward eagerly to being in worship with you this Sunday and, God willing, being back with you to stay (at least for some months) a few days after that.

Nancy has been writing from Springfield, saying that she is enjoying her church and other activities, including membership in a 24-hour-a-day gym. She sends her greetings to everyone. For those of you getting this newsletter by e-mail, you'll find a Christmas letter attached from **Sara and Rusty**. Those of you getting this by snail mail will find a paper copy on the narthex bulletin board.

Although I'm out of touch with the local news, I do ask your prayers for some people further away. **Karla Koll**, our missionary in Guatemala, asked for prayers recently for the **Tzul Tzul family**. Here's her e-mail of December 21:

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Yesterday, Javier and I attended the funeral of Jose Marcelo Tzul Tzul, one of Javier's classmates from the Rafael Landivar University.

Last Wednesday, Marcelo's eldest son, Byron, was struck by a car as he was walking. Due to his severe head injuries, he was taken to the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Guatemala City. Marcelo traveled to Guatemala City on Friday to see his son. As he and two of his brothers made their way from the hospital to one of his brother's home in the afternoon, they were attacked by a group of thieves who stole money and beat them. They continued on their way. Marcelo got up the next morning and prepared to travel back to his home in Paquí, Totonicopan. After breakfast, he told his brother he wanted to rest a bit before starting out. When his brother went to check on him a short time later, he found that Marcelo had died.

What caused Marcelo's death? The shock of seeing his son in a coma? Blows suffered at the hands of thieves? An underlying medical condition that had caused him to lose weight in recently months? We'll never know.

Marcelo had worked as a vendor in the market before he decided to study political science. He struggled with many burdens during his university studies, especially a deficient secondary education and a family to feed. He spent a lot of time at our home receiving academic support and encouragement from Javier. He was a gentle man who thought deeply about the problems in his community. He wrote a licenciatura thesis on political actors in his community. He graduated in November of 2008. He was working with an NGO.

Though Marcelo was not involved in any church, his father has been very active in Catholic Action. The funeral service, held in the Catholic Action chapel, was led by lay Delegates of the Word. The message was very simple. In our Father's house there are many rooms, therefore there is room for everyone. It was an inclusive message I haven't heard very often here in Guatemala in any church.

Marcelo, who was 45 years old, leaves behind his wife, Maria Candalaria Tzul, seven children, and one grandchild, as well as his parents and eleven siblings. I ask your prayers for this family.

In these days as we await Jesus' birth, we remember that God's Reign has not yet come in plenitude. May we grieve with those who grieve even as we experience the joy of Christ's coming.

Blessings,

Karla

Rev. Dr. Karla Ann Koll

Professor of History, Mission and Religions

Latin American Biblical University, Costa Rica

Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA), Guatemala

Presbyterian Church (USA) Mission Co-worker

<http://game.pcusa.org/ministries/missionconnections/koll-karla-ann/>

Please remember all of our ongoing health concerns within the congregation and our extended families, and remember also the people of Haiti, suffering from the cholera epidemic in the wake of the devastating earthquake. And although the holiday season is over as far as retailers are concerned, the seasonal grief and depression from the loss of loved ones and from dark winter days does not always go away so quickly. Please keep your eyes and hearts open for hurting friends, neighbors, and church members.

Upcoming Events

January means annual events coming up again. We will **install our new officers on Sunday, January 9**, when we also celebrate Epiphany (which happens officially on Thursday, January 6) and the Baptism of the Lord and wind up the Christmas season. Then, in accordance with the By-laws revisions you passed last January, our **ANNUAL MEETING, PRECEDED BY A POTLUCK, will follow worship on Sunday, January 30**. Those of you who write Annual Reports – here is a reminder to **GET THOSE REPORTS TO BOB SCHULTZ by January 15** if possible. That will give him a week to collate them and make copies of the whole Annual Report for distribution Sunday, January 23 ahead of the meeting the week following.

January 31 marks the end of my second **Interim Pastor Covenant** with you. The Session and I still have to finalize the details for the new, part-time Covenant to begin February 1. I will let you know just what that will look like as soon as we figure it out. The initial plan is for me to preach two Sundays a month, be in the office two weekdays each week, and have one weekday afternoon for visiting.

What's been happening

Rumor has it that you had a beautiful **Christmas Eve** service, with lots of people there. Thank you, Tita and Carla, for the wonderful music and thank you, Sharon, for all the coordinating you have been doing for all of the services I had to miss. Sunday, December 26, Gary Gardner preached and celebrated Communion; because of that, we will NOT have Communion on January 2 as originally planned, and will wait until January 23 for our next Communion service. Other than that, I need YOU to tell ME what's been happening, and I hope you'll be able to do that soon.

In Christ, Katherine

PS The January calendar is with this newsletter.

