



In His Timing

In His Perfect Timing We had our first in-person worship service in the reopening on Pentecost Sunday. We met in the outdoor patio of our earthquake damaged buildings rather than the much smaller rented location where we could barely seat 10 people under the strict social distancing requirements.

Because of our position on the globe, Puerto Rican summers are hot, and Ponce is the hottest part of the island; but fortunately, our usual 3pm service time just happens to perfectly coincide with the ideal angle of the sun for casting shade over our patio. Like clockwork, we set up the altar and sound system under a blazing sun, and the cool shade swept over the impromptu sanctuary right at 3:00. Having recently spent a lot of my free time being fascinated by precise orbital mechanics because of the recent SpaceX launch, the timing of it all really struck me. So much of what we are doing lately seems like we are making it up as we go, yet God was always a step ahead.

The shade came from a quenepa tree that was probably planted when the historic house that is now our mercy center was built, perhaps 100 years ago. A church member reminded me that they were dealing with their own pandemic in Ponce back then. This type of tree is a symbol of the city, and every year there is a festival to celebrate the harvest of the delicious quenepa fruit, (you may know it as the Spanish lime.) The seedling of that tree made many trips around our sun before it was ready to provide that perfectly timed shade, patiently marching towards its purpose for 2020.

It was not only the position of the sun on the horizon however, but of the earth around the sun. Pentecost Sunday is the day we celebrate the church emerging from its enclosure in the upper room and spreading into the whole world. We celebrate the beginning of a new era, the harvest that comes with God's perfect timing. God had waited patiently since the time of creation for the

Prayers:

- Continued reopening of church and community activities in Ponce
- Thanksgiving for a safe delivery of baby DiLiberto
- Thanksgiving for Stephanie and Cindy on completing one year of service

right moment to pour out His Spirit on mankind again, to begin the harvest season of the righteousness of His Son. The seed planted at the dawn of the world had grown and put out its leaves to bear fruit, patiently marching its way to the day of the Lord.

In my sermon, to those gathered under the shade of that tree, I pointed out the implication in Joel's prophecy which is cited in Acts, that the "Last Days" begin at Pentecost. I directed their attention to the crumbling towers and rubble all around us and asked, "is this what the end of days looks like?" Perhaps we are all so concerned with determining the times and knowing if this is the end of the world, that we have forgotten what the "end" means to our Lord. It means that the long-awaited fruits of the tree planted long ago are ripe. It means it is time for the harvest! I directed their attention to the quenepa tree above them, filled with the tiny beginnings of thousands of fruits, (they will be ready to pick in August).

This is what Pentecost means, this is what God's timing brings, and this is where we are at in our long trip around the sun. Our little congregation has re-emerged after months of lockdown. In the midst of the ruins of our city, you can see the little buds and shoots of new relationships, of interest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ for sinners, everywhere. We don't know what is next, it's hurricane season now, but all time is God's time, and He has declared it harvest time.



We have not met in our church on Calle Salud since early January apart from a brief visit during the Foro due to the earthquake damage.

As you read earlier, we have a beautiful Quenepa tree in our patio along with a mango tree in the back that drops its leaves perpetually. Because of that we were in need of some major clean up. Many of the members came out a few days before the Pentecost service and we cleaned up the grounds! This was the first time we had all seen in each other in months! We had a fun time and at least for a few hours things seemed to be back to normal.

*The insurance surveyor was able to come out last month and assess the damage on our church building. The good news is that our building does not need to be taken down, simply repaired! This however is another process that we are now in with insurance and figuring out next steps.

EXPLORADORES DE LA CREACION
CAMPAMENTO CON PROPÓSITO

CAMPAMENTO VIRTUAL
TOTALMENTE GRATIS
SOLO NIÑOS DE 5 AÑOS EN ADELANTE
E INCLUYE KIT DE MATERIALES
¡CUPOS LIMITADOS!

VÍA: zoom
7, 14, 21 DE JULIO DE 2020

Escuela Luterana FUENTE DE VIDA

✓ TALLERES DE MANEJO DE EMOCIONES ✓ MANUALIDADES
✓ ENSEÑANZAS BÍBLICAS ✓ COCIENCIA SOBRE MEDIDAS DE HIGIENE

Virtual VBS! We have begun working as a team alongside the Lutheran Hour office here to offer a VBS online. We are sending out boxes of crafts and special snacks to participants in June to be used over a span of three weeks in July.

COVID 19 has definitely brought our ministry efforts together even more as a team, and this VBS is certainly one of them. We ask for prayers as we continue to work together on offering this unique VBS this year to share about who we are as God's new creation through Jesus' death and resurrection!

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