

A decorative border of globes in various colors (blue, green, yellow, cyan) surrounds the text. At the bottom left, there is a larger globe with several black silhouettes of people running around it.

## Messiah Lutheran Church of Camrose

### WORLD MISSION MONTH, January, 2022

The words of Peter to Jesus (John 6:59) NRSV:

***"Lord to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life."***

How do those words get shared around the world?

Each week in January, 2022, a different organization and person or persons serving with that organization will be featured.

Here is the focus for the fourth Sunday:

The Synod of Alberta, and Messiah in particular, have taken as a major project the support in prayer and funds of needy children in four schools which are part of the ministry of the Lutheran Church in Colombia, South America.

**It is needy children in these four schools which are the focus of World Mission Month for the fourth Sunday in January.**

Messiah has two means by which financial support can reach these needy children in Colombia so they can attend these schools:

- (1) Messiah's Annual meeting has often voted to assign interest from its endowment funds to these schools;
- (2) Individual members may designate a personal special offering to "Lutheran Schools in Colombia".

Our individual prayers, and Sunday morning worship service prayers, are also essential ways in which we implore our Lord to bless the work of these schools in Colombia, to His Honour, and for the spiritual health of the Church in Colombia.

World Mission Month is organized by the World Mission Group which reports to the Witnessing Committee.

The World Mission Group acknowledges with appreciation the full support of Pastor Bev Swanson, Music Ministry Coordinator Tova Olson, the Messiah Office Staff, and the Technical Broadcast personnel.

Questions or Comments may be directed to Ray Blacklock, Chairperson, World Mission Group, or its members: Nora Gilbertson, Vincent and Mary Ellen Eriksson, Connie Landstrom, Erhard Pinno, Cece Watts, Advisor Pastor Bev Swanson

***To God be the Glory!***

January, 2022



## CELCO Schools

Thank you, Messiah Lutheran, for your faithful prayers and financial assistance toward the CELCO (Colegio Evangelico Luterano de Colombia) schools. Your support has made possible the continuation of a long standing history of teaching Christian values and educating the hearts and minds of children of Colombia!

The challenges brought about by the Covid 19 pandemic were felt in Colombia as they were felt all over the world. Sickness, loss of work, and necessary restrictions brought about many challenges to families. Schools were closed to in person studies beginning in March 2020 and extended into 2021. Education was expected to be provided virtually. The challenge was that the CELCO schools did not have the equipment necessary to provide virtual education, and many students did not have the means to receive the education in their homes.



Pre-School children praying at CELCO School Sogamoso.



Children playing at CELCO El Cocuy.

Being a private school, CELCO does not receive funding from the government and therefore students pay a monthly tuition. During 2020 enrolment decreased, as families did not have the means to pay for their children to attend school. How were the schools to provide the necessary education for their students? "*Lord to whom shall we go?*" The answer came from scholarships provided by Messiah and other congregations from Synod Companions of Alberta and the United States that allowed children to attend school virtually. Other support networks provided CELCO schools with assistance to purchase necessary equipment such as computers and projectors, as well as to upgrade their internet services in order to facilitate online learning.

In Colombia, the school year goes from the end of January to November. In January 2021 schools in Colombia were instructed to continue to meet virtually. But in July 2021, after the mid year break, schools were authorized to open again. CELCO schools opened with all the necessary health protocols such as temperature checks upon entry, hand sanitization, shoe sanitizing pads, social distancing, and mandatory mask use.

When students began to return to CELCO schools in July, some families chose to continue to have their children learn from home for various reasons, others elected to



Children dancing the Joropo at CELCO Paz de Ariporo.



send their children to school. Therefore, the teachers provided both in person and virtual options, both synchronous and asynchronous. As it has been for many teachers during the pandemic, this was challenging for the CELCO staff, however "God was present in the labor of the schools and God's faithfulness was felt each moment." (from a CELCO report Oct 2021) Special festival days were again celebrated such as Day of the Bible, Science Day, Family Day, and English Day! Students again enjoyed the high quality of education within a Christian environment that the CELCO schools are known for.



Children playing instruments in an assembly at CELCO San Lucas, Bogota.



Children in class at CELCO Sogamoso.

Regarding the political and economic situation in Colombia, demonstrations against tax reform and a nation wide strike affecting transportation of goods and services, as well as city bus transportation, did have an affect on the CELCO schools in the spring/summer 2021. Teachers and students in Bogota, who depend on buses for their commute, struggled to get to school. Goods and services were scarce, which affected the entire country. By September, Colombia was less often in the news, with the national strike over and

demonstrations less frequent. As in Canada, Covid 19 numbers decreased as vaccines were rolled out. However, now we are hearing of a rise in numbers with the Omicron variant, which is present in Colombia as well.

The plan for January 2022 is for CELCO schools to open for the new school year with 100% in person learning. Your prayers and support are appreciated immensely by staff and students of the four CELCO schools of Colombia.

Praise be to God for His wonderful goodness provided through you! Amen.



CELCO El Cocuy



Children playing at CELCO El Cocuy.