



El Chairó Boliviano— The Bolivian Stew  
November 28, 2009

*Greetings from the National Pastors' Conference in Viacha, Bolivia!* Today as I write to you, I have no stories of squished bus rides or hauling 13 sacks of rice to share, but rather the reality of our world's well-being. We've all seen the emails warning us what will happen if we don't begin to take better care of our world. Most of us also know by now what we can do to help and are already doing things like recycling, turning off the water when we brush our teeth, or using products with low environmental impact to name a few. Here in Bolivia, though, the view is a bit different. Last week, I went to use the bathroom at the office and the toilet didn't flush. I went to wash my hands and there was no water. I asked if there was a problem with the bathroom and was told that the problem wasn't with the bathroom, but our water supply. I learned that we're in the middle of a water scarcity. In the states when our water or we read water our see a different. Each and less of water in the Vice-bitants; in 75% of them Lutheran



supply is low, we hear announcements on t.v. articles in the paper about how we should not lawns or wash our cars but we really don't care in the amount of water we have access year according to people from the office less snow appears on the mountain and the level the reservoirs and rivers drops. According to ministry of Drinkable Water, 2-3 million ha-Bolivia don't have access to drinkable water. are in the rural areas where the majority of churches are. Water is a symbol of life. In the Aymara culture, a teaching passed down for generations says that you should not sell water better is a basic group or privilege Jesus reminds woman at the der and cul-the woman gift given to reminds us that deeming love.

cause water is life and life cannot be sold. Water is a human right; it cannot be the right of only one privatized by the government or big businesses. Jesus reminds us of this in his meeting with the Samaritan well. Breaking down the many barriers of gender, he uses the image of water to explain to that the water of life given freely by God is a everyone. Water is also used in our baptism and we are washed in the holy waters of God's re-



This month, let us remember this and as we drink a glass of water, take a bath, or wash our clothes give thanks for this blessing of life from God, water. Let us be even more conscious, spread the word, learn to be better advocates for our brothers and sisters in Christ who we don't see struggle in this reality, and continue to do what we can to make our world a more just and healthy place to live.

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## Spotlight on... The graduates



Some of you may remember me mentioning an ancestral medicine fair that Justin and I attended our first weeks here in Bolivia. Since then we have learned so much more about the participants that were involved in this fair. For the past three years, the ELCA has sponsored a group of 20 adults from every district of the Lutheran church who were willing to study both modern and ancestral medicine. These district representatives gathered every two months for one whole week to learn from both doctors and amautas (wise elders). They have learned how to treat many common ailments such as the cold, diarrhea, aches and pains, and even diabetes. They have even worked together to produce their own natural medicine using plants and herbs abundant in their respective regions. Justin and I were asked to present a workshop at the end of their training on health and the Bible. With the group, we determined that having good health involves the whole person. We looked at similarities between the Trinity and mental, physical, and spiritual health concluding that health and healing is our shared endeavor. During the National Pastors' Conference in Viacha, Justin and I were honored to present the Responsables Populares de Salud (RPS) graduates with their certificates alongside Pastor Presidente Cristóbal. Their graduation is a blessing to so many church and community members who do not have access to medical care or who cannot afford the cost of visiting a doctor. As one graduate said, "I am thankful for the opportunity I have been given to study (medicine). This education is one that no one can take from me and something I can use to help people."

### Top 5 Surprises

1. Huarjata on a restaurant menu means pig head
2. Learning how to use the bathroom on the side of a mountain
3. Having Sunday school outside
4. Amount of rocks in Walata (see picture on next page)
5. Water crisis



Aymara alphabet- notice any differences?



Fruit and veggies are all organic, but must be disinfected before eating them.



Us in Walata...see all the rocks?  
Also, please take note of the beautiful mountain in the background!



Justin sitting in the Paja Brava waiting to play soccer. It's not exactly what brooms are made of, but it's close.



We saw these kids dancing at the Plaza Villaroel.



We bought our furniture and then brought it back by taxi. The guy in the picture carried most everything up all by himself using only a small rope. It was incredible! Needless to say, he got a nice tip!

**What We've Been up to Lately...**

- since we now have our residency (yay!) we're working on our temporary resident ID cards (harder than it sounds)
- met with the National Missionaries
- went to our first church anniversary in Walata (Justin presented on liturgy and we did lots of singing with three different musical groups)
- looking for a car (it's a big process as well!)
- went to our first Bolivian wedding (it was very beautiful)
- Justin gave a sermon and the final remarks at the National Lutheran Pastors' Conference
- finished buying furniture for our apartment (we live in the neighborhood of Sopocachi within La Paz)
- went to the cemetery for the Day of the Dead celebration



A picture of one of the bands we sang with in Walata (the ladies even had coordinated dance moves)!



Here, I'm standing with a llama statue I found in Viacha.

Justin and Pastor Choque team teaching liturgy in Walata. Justin spoke in Spanish and Pastor Choque translated into Aymara.



At the wedding reception we went to, the bride and groom received a whole living room set as one of their gifts. A few things that were different:

1. During the wedding the bride and groom exchanged not only rings, but coins to symbolize their equality in making financial decisions.
2. They had 2 weddings on the same day. One was civil and one religious.
3. To congratulate the bride and groom, everyone formed a line and put a mixture of confetti and flower petals on their head (it was a really long line)!



Our living room



Our bedroom



November 1st and 2nd is Day of the Dead. This holiday celebrates the life of those family members or friends who have passed away. Here in La Paz, everyone goes to the cemetery close to where we work to decorate the graves of their loved ones. You see people playing instruments, singing, praying, and eating. This was truly a moving experience for us.



**Romans 10:15** *And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

At the National Lutheran Pastors' Conference we talked about how we are all missionaries and taking off our shoes, we said a prayer for our feet.



Here, Justin is giving out communion. Some churches only get communion on their church anniversaries once a year. (This is because of the small amount of ordained pastors available to celebrate holy communion).



This year, elementary and high school students from all over La Paz, alongside universities and companies, held a water fair. In the picture I'm standing in front of an ecological bus designed to educate the public about water usage in the cities and countryside.



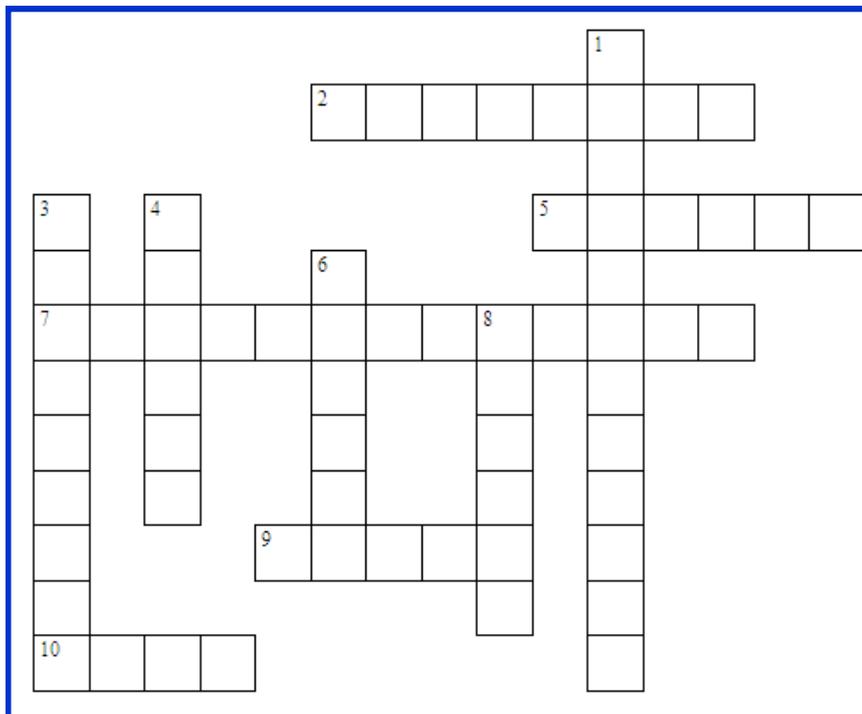
After lunch, I had a chance to walk with some of the women up the hill in Viacha.



**In Viacha, Justin preached in front of this powerful painting.**



The IELB office invited us to share Thanksgiving with them this year according to our tradition.



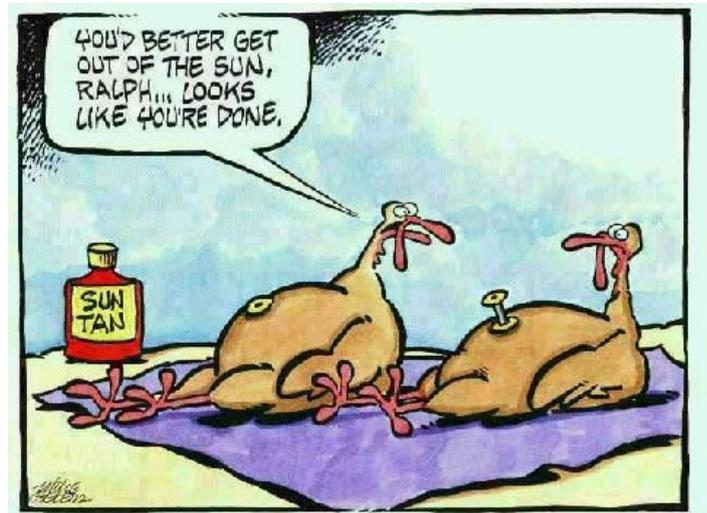
**ACROSS**

- 2 Pig head
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 10:15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
- 7 The \_\_\_\_\_ .wordpress.com (web address of Justin's food blog)
- 9 There's a \_\_\_\_\_ scarcity in La Paz
- 10 Acronym of the Bolivian Lutheran Church

**DOWN**

- 1 Día de Los Muertos
- 3 Name of neighborhood where we live
- 4 Town with LOTS of stones
- 6 Where we went for the National Pastors' Conference
- 8 Language spoken by most of the Lutheran Church in Bolivia

**Happy (late) Thanksgiving!**



Also, please be sure to  
 check out Justin's devotional blog: [thepilgrimpastor.blogspot.com](http://thepilgrimpastor.blogspot.com)  
 & his food blog: [thepilgrimpastor.wordpress.com](http://thepilgrimpastor.wordpress.com)

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