



# El Chairo Boliviano The Bolivian Stew



**OCTOBER** - **NOVEMBER** - **DECEMBER**

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

As we have come to the end of 2010 and stepped over into 2011, we have the chance to stop and look back on the blessings, challenges and footsteps of where God has brought us. Every time we finish a year, Justin and I are reminded of the African American spiritual that sustained us on our pilgrimage through Spain and still speaks to us in Bolivia.

The refrain of this spiritual goes, "We've come this far by faith, leanin' on the Lord. Trustin' in his holy Word, he's never failed us yet. Oh, can't turn around, we've come this far by faith." Truly we've come to the bridge between 2010 and 2011 by faith, trusting in all that God has revealed to us and all that continues to be revealed through his presence in the church throughout the world. 2010 brought with it joyous moments that we celebrated and challenging obstacles that tested our faith; the birth and baptism of our first God-child and the feelings of sinking in the midst of tension and institutional conflict. But through it all, we learned to lean on the Lord, trusting in his holy Word, which is Jesus Christ, who has yet to fail us and this, my friends, is good news!

The theme of walking by faith also calls to mind the poem, "Caminante, no hay camino" by Antonio Machado. There is a line where he writes, "caminante no hay camino se hace camino al andar" (translated: "traveler, there is no path, the path is made by walking"). Being with the IELB as their first Lutheran missionaries from the ELCA, we have had to make many a new path because there was no previous path we could take. Together with our sisters and brothers of the IELB, we learned how to walk together in life-giving ways that lift up our common mission and proclaim the gospel with every step. We are accompanying ELCA missionaries and are seeing the realities of this identity play out in many ways that excite us to see what God has in store for us in 2011.

Not only are we accompanying ELCA missionaries, but so are you. Throughout 2010, you have journeyed with us through this newsletter, Justin's blogs and various other resources. You have blessed us in ways beyond what you can know and really it's people like you who empower us to "come this far by faith" and remind us that we are all in mission for God.

**Here's to a great 2010 and an exciting 2011!**

**God's blessings on your new year!**

*Kari Eller*



## *What We've Done...*

### **Facilitated a sustainability workshop alongside presidency–**

“What does it mean to be the church?” was the question that we posed to open the sustainability workshop. Each participant wrote his or her answer on a piece of paper cut in the shape of a person and presented them individually. After presenting, they taped the people inside the outline of a church (temple).

Together, with all of our ideas, hope, faith, presence and ministries WE are the Church with Christ at our center.

The workshop also included small group time, songs and future planning for the IELB.



### **Led a CEBIPAS weekend course–**



**Based on his Lutheran module for the IELB and ISEAT, Justin taught pilot lessons on the first two chapters with a group of Lutheran distance learners in Caranavi, Bolivia. Nine participants covered the history and diversity of Lutheranism in Bolivia, the development of Lutheran identity in Bolivia and the Lutheran confessions.**

## CEBIPAS workshop continued– fishbowl dynamic



Part of growing in one's identity means learning how to listen to others who think and act differently. In this activity, called the "fish bowl," students assumed the persona of differing opinions and perspectives of members of the IELB given what was written on a piece of paper. Not only was this activity A LOT of fun, students gained perspective from the opportunity to speak to each other in different ways about many present realities.

## Spent time with the girls at the Internado– the importance of maps

What do you get when you put five girls, one missionary and one world map together in a room? About two hours of impromptu lessons on world geography, politics, bible trivia, languages and cultures. A few of the girls' questions were quite interesting, for example:

- Where in the world would you find sharks?
- How long does it take to get from your home town to Bolivia?
- (pointing at Russia one asked) What language do they speak here?
- Where's the Garden of Eden? Noah's Ark?



## Shared at a Mission 21 meeting– about life in Bolivia as ELCA missionaries

Around 12 Mission 21 representatives visited Mocomoco, Bolivia and La Paz, Bolivia from Germany and Switzerland. Justin and I were honored to be a part of one of their “information gathering” meetings that took place at ISEAT. We were asked to share what it is that we do on a day-to-day basis and answered questions about our work. One of the most thought provoking questions we were asked was, “So, how has your faith changed in the past year?” For me, the answer was “Entirely.” (and of course, following that, a bigger explanation). It was a question that took me by surprise and made me stop and reflect on the past year in a way that I had not thought to do. While it wasn’t necessarily the most easy question to answer, it was by far the question that I appreciated the most. So, now I’d like to ask you, “How has your faith changed this year?” and invite you to share your answer with others.

## Accompanied Mission 21– hosting Bernhard Erni



**David Wunsch**  
**ELCA**  
**South America**  
**Regional Representative**

**Bernhard Erni**  
**Mission 21**  
**Sister Congregation**  
**Liaison**

**Here, Bernhard and David are standing by a sign that explains the Reformation before attending a worship service with us at El Sinai Lutheran Church in Rio Seco, a sector of El Alto, Bolivia. A retired pastor from Switzerland, Bernhard, has traveled the world and makes regular visits to one of Switzerland’s many sister congregations in Cuba. While in Bolivia, he worked diligently to write descriptions of the congregations he visited with the hope of establishing relationships that will one day evolve into even more sister congregations, one of the ways that Switzerland opens its arms to embrace God’s family in other lands.**

**Attended Reformation Sunday Events– Lutheran youth dramatized the history of the Reformation and we celebrated the birthday of the Lutheran Church with cake and song**



### **Taught at ISEAT– English III**

This trimester, my English classes usually began with one of the students asking, “Can I make the coffee?” Even though only two classes (English I and II) are required by ISEAT in order to graduate, I had several students who asked to continue their studies with me and we made it a point to begin every class with informal conversation (and coffee!). Throughout the course, we also used Skype to talk with and interview several people from the United States. We enjoyed the experience so much, that we’d like to have more in the next trimester and include you! **Send me an email (kfeller5@yahoo.com) if you have Skype on your computer and would be willing to spend about an hour of your time sharing about your life and location and in exchange, we’ll be glad to tell you about ours and answer any questions that you might have about Bolivia.**

### **Taught at ISEAT– Worship and Liturgy**

Focusing on the history and development of worship and liturgy from the Old Testament until today, students in Justin’s class learned the importance of knowing our liturgical heritage and had the opportunity to practice baptism or communion. As the class progressed, students slowly began to see more of the threads that unite the denominations and that make them unique by sharing their own personal experiences with their colleagues. One of the core concepts that students took away from the course is that meaningful worship is always contextual and grows from our experiences.

### **Held confirmation classes– San Pablo Lutheran Church, El Alto, Bolivia**

Confirmation is a step in our spiritual journey when we affirm what the Holy Spirit has been doing in our life since our baptism and take responsibility of the further growth of our faith in the years to come. This year, Justin co-taught confirmation classes on the Augsburg Confession, Smalcald articles and the Office of the Keys. Throughout the classes, confirmands were encouraged to ask questions and to reflect on their own personal experiences. After stating their beliefs, the confirmands were welcomed with a round of applause as official members of the IELB.



**“and the Holy Spirit  
descended on him in  
bodily form like a dove.  
And a voice came from  
heaven: You are my son,  
whom I love; with you I  
am well pleased.”**

**Luke 3:22**

## Obtained our 2 year residency-



**“Celebrate good times, come on!”**

Justin and I have finally received official paperwork and identification cards needed to extend our stay in Bolivia (which is not an easy feat)!

## Met with Sunday school teachers-

Throughout the past year, I have heard from many different people the need for Lutheran-specific Sunday school material for children. Thinking about how to best address this need and create something sustainable, I decided to form a group who with me (and eventually without me) can work to write lessons for children ages 4 to 12 and who better to do that than the Sunday school teachers themselves?! Saturday, December 4, 2010, was our first meeting and to begin, each teacher described what the Sunday school program is like in her congregation, its strengths and challenges and shared ideas of future events and activities for the youth. The idea of the group is to publish each month via the Internet, interactive lessons grounded in Lutheran principles in Spanish (and with some hope Aymara) following the lectionary that can be adapted to fit many different types of congregations, not only in Bolivia, but in other countries as well. To get the group started, though, I worked with Maritza Castañeta, National Women’s Coordinator and long time Christian educator to write lessons for the month of January and February (it takes a while to get things started!). **TO GET YOUR FREE COPY OF LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS FOR CHILDREN MONTH-BY-MONTH IN SPANISH CLICK ON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL RESOURCES TAB ON MY WEBSITE.** Remember to contextualize them and if you do use them, please send me a quick note to let me know what you think. My email is [kfeller5@yahoo.com](mailto:kfeller5@yahoo.com) .

## Facilitated part of the National Women's Encounter–



Reflecting on a year's worth of workshops on empowerment and sustainability, I asked women at the National Women's Encounter, "What does it mean to be powerful?" (and of course, Maritza translated that into Aymara for me). A few of their responses are listed in the box below.

The women worked in groups to answer the question, "**What does it mean to be powerful?**"

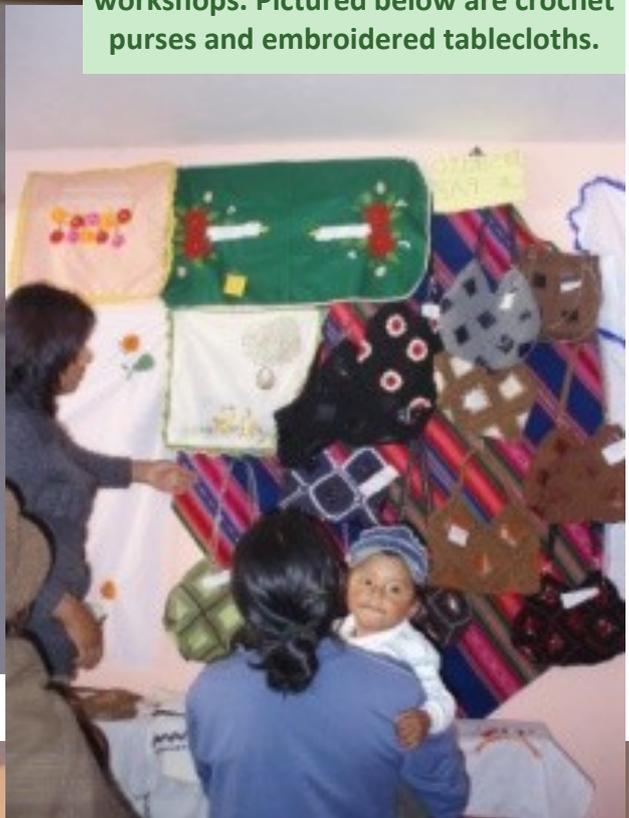
- "To make your own decisions."
- "To lead worship, teach Sunday school, to preach, to lead singing, to organize."
- "To be an authority."
- "We are powerless without God."





A Lutheran sister shares her part of a group presentation

Every year, the women have a type of craft fair, presenting what they have learned how to make in their regional workshops. Pictured below are crochet purses and embroidered tablecloths.



Painted tablecloths from Santa Cruz, Bolivia

## Traveled– Our visit to Argentina!



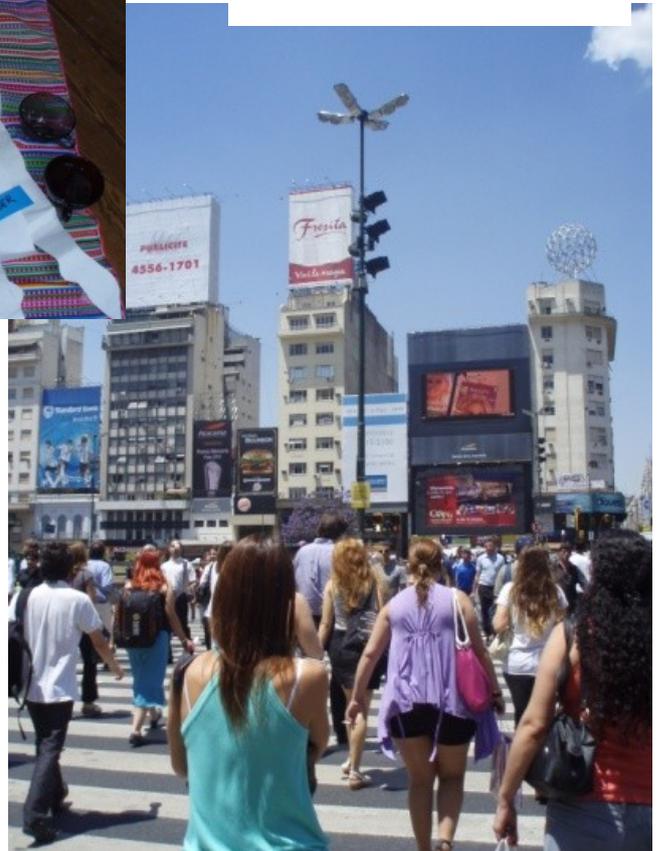
In November, Justin and I went for the first time to Buenos Aires, Argentina to spend time with David Wunsch and his family learning about the Lutheran Church in Argentina and their ministry. Here, we are being presented to their congregation as guests. Below (left): Props used to teach a lesson on our creation by Kate Lawler, David's wife and the YAGM Coordinator. Below (right): the bustling city of Buenos Aires



Loyda Uri, Bolivian seminarian studying in Buenos Aires, poses with her mother. Soon, she will return to Bolivia after 7 years of study! Congratulations, Loyda!



Medialunas (really yummy croissants) famous to Argentina are the best for breakfast!



## Traveled– Our trip to Uruguay!



We took a boat similar to this one on our trip from Argentina to Uruguay, crossing Rio de la Plata.



The organic farm we stayed at produced very delicious cheeses.



Looking at zapallo, a type of squash/ green pumpkin



Close to the river, there was a park with this interesting swing...Justin and David's children, Emily and Matthew, had a lot of fun!



When you're away from home, thanksgiving can be a hard time, but this year, Justin and I were blessed to share this time with not only David, Kate, Emily and Matthew, but also the YAGMs (Young Adults in Global Mission) and one Uruguayan!

Setting up for worship, two YAGMs light candles illuminating drawings that each YAGM created to represent their inner journey throughout the past year serving as short-term missionaries to Argentina and Uruguay. **To learn more about the YAGM program, feel free to visit the following website:** <http://www.elca.org/yagm>



Original Portuguese houses such as these two, line the colonial street, “Calle de los Suspiros” in Colonia, Uruguay.



## Baptism- Caranavi info.



Justín and I became baptismal godparents to Marisa Sarai Villegas Mendoza on December 12, 2010. (In Bolivia, the godparents hold the baby throughout the ceremony and Miss Marisa even held her OWN candle! That part was a bit scary...we thought for a moment that she was going to set her hair on fire by accident.)



Lunch Menu  
*Boiled banana*  
*Boiled egg*  
*Strawberry yogurt*



After the baptism, we spent time learning a bit more about Caranavi, helping plant stevia (the sweetener Truvia comes from) and making lunch in the jungle.

# Justin's Step-by-Step Guide #1- How to enjoy coconuts straight from the tree!



**Step 1:** Take a long stick with a blade-like hook and convince coconuts to fall from tree.



**Step 2:** Bring coconuts to machete cutting area.



**Step 3:** Carefully chop off the outer shell of coconuts watching your fingers.



**Step 4:** Find the "soft areas" of the coconut's inner shell and poke a hole big enough for a straw. Enjoy coconut water.



**Step 5:** Once the water is gone, split the coconut in half and eat the gelatin-like inside with a spoon!



## Christmas- Party with friends in La Paz and coming home



Left to right: Ana María Rocha (our landlady), Robin and Rob (pastors of an English-speaking congregation in Calacoto, Bolivia), me, Marisol Mendoza, Justin, Esteban Villegas, Marisa (our godchild)



This Christmas my dad and aunt decided that it was time to teach my brother, Justin and I how to make butter mints, something that they did often together growing up. It is not an easy process, but it's fascinating! The mixture of sugar, water and butter must be heated to just the right temperature, cooled on a marble slab, twisted and pulled until the perfect texture, cut quickly and stored until creamy and soft (they are really hard at first).



**Skiing was also a family outing this holiday season. After a few trips down the bunny slope, we got our “ski legs” back and were off to the bigger runs (Ok, Justin was off to the black diamonds, I stuck to the big blue squares!).**

Also, please be sure to check out Justin’s blog:  
[thepilgrimpastor.blogspot.com](http://thepilgrimpastor.blogspot.com)

**If you know of someone who would also like to receive this email and who is not currently on my email list, please send me their first and last name along with their email address to: [kfeller5@yahoo.com](mailto:kfeller5@yahoo.com) and I’ll make sure that they also receive a copy! If you would not like to receive any more e-newsletters from Bolivia, please email me at: [kfeller5@yahoo.com](mailto:kfeller5@yahoo.com) with the words “STOP” in the message title.**