



!AMIGOS EN CRISTO!

News from IDW Hispanic Ministry in Denison, Storm Lake,
& Des Moines: **Missionary/Pastor Daniel Vogel**

Iowa District
West, LCMS

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Our congregation in Denison celebrated a special Christmas together with worship, a meal and a piñata.



Our Des Moines group celebrating Christmas.



One of our home Advent Posadas in Storm Lake.

ADVENT, CHRISTMAS & EPIPHANY

What's a Posada? That's the way we prepare for Christmas during the Advent season. It's a home gathering that commemorates Joseph and Mary searching for a place to rest when they arrived in Bethlehem. It's a very common tradition in Mexico and other Hispanic countries. The tradition is to visit a home and then divide into two groups. One group sings outside pleading for Joseph and Mary to come in, the other group sings inside to reject them. In our Lutheran version when Joseph and Mary are finally let in we have a Bible Study for children and also for the adults, with songs, treats and fellowship. It's a great evening and has been a very popular way for our people to invite friends to a church event in which we share the Gospel of Jesus' coming and salvation for all. We make it very clear to all ages what the true Christmas is really all about.

This year the theme of our Advent and Christmas became SNOW, lots of it, with wind and storms. We definitely had a white Christmas. Unfortunately we had so much snow that our Christmas services were not held until Sunday. We had hoped to hold services Christmas week on Tuesday in Des Moines, Wednesday in Storm Lake and Thursday in Denison. But we were only able to go to Des Moines for Christmas services. So we celebrated on Sunday the 27th and later on Epiphany, January 6.

Christmas is a special time for Hispanics. In their home countries there are lots of family gatherings and fiestas (parties). Unfortunately many families are consumed with all the festivities for the Virgin of Guadalupe. She is the Virgin Mary who many Mexicans believe appeared to a peasant in Mexico about 500 years ago. Her day is celebrated beginning on December 12 and for many families dominates the Christmas season.

We offer to the Hispanics the story of Jesus from the Bible. Many have not heard the truth of the Christmas from the Bible and are grateful for our clear teachings about the first Christmas. It's a great season. It's fun to celebrate all the way to Epiphany, January 6 with the visit and gifts of the Wise Men.



ADVENT POSADA IN DENISON:

The picture at the left is part of the group of the folks gathered in Gloria Becerra's house for a Posada event in Denison. It's a special preparation for Christmas. We focus on the true story of Christmas, the story of Jesus' birth and why His coming in human form is so important for our Christmas faith. We sing, eat, and have fellowship together. Gloria and her friends made a delicious soup called 'pozoli' that all enjoyed. We also made some new friends.

EPIPHANY IN DENISON is always a special day. For many Hispanics the visit of the Wise Men on January 6 is the biggest part of Christmas when children receive gifts just as did Baby Jesus. We include the children in our worship with lots of 'Kings.' This year we gave gifts to 20 of our children and had a special fellowship treat of the "Christmas Cake" for all following the service.



MY TYSON CHAPLAINCY AT THE BEEF PLANT IN DENISON

One of the joys of my ministry at Tyson are the folks who come to me with special needs. Having a Chaplain in the work place gives workers the opportunity to discuss personal questions and faith needs and receive a pastor's counsel and guidance. For example, last month one of the workers stopped me at break time in the hallway and on her way back up to work she asked me for Bible verses that would give her strength to make a big decision. I scribbled down a few of my favorites verses and she went back to work. Another worker stopped me to ask if I would come to his newly purchased house to bless it. I look forward to doing it. Another worker spoke to me about putting her two children in our school. We're glad she did!



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PLEASE PRAY: + In Thanksgiving for our Advent and Christmas services and events. + For new English classes in Storm Lake and Carroll that they will help us to make new friends in these communities. + For new goals and plans for the new year and the new decade in Hispanic ministry in our District. + For our new Lutheran Hour Spanish radio from Storm Lake "Para el Camino" that it might reach Hispanics in and around Denison and Storm Lake. + For the adult class in Des Moines that will be confirmed next month. + For Jara and her children who have begun coming to church in Storm Lake. + For the many individuals and congregations of Iowa District West who are so supportive of this ministry as they see the need to reach out to their own communities.