

# Greetings from Connie

## March 2013

**Iglesia Evangélica Dominicana  
Apartado 42 Barahona, Dominican Republic**



### **New Development in the Education System of the Dominican Republic!**

The educational system here in the Dominican has always consisted of double sessions. Half of the school children attend school in the morning and the other half attend in the afternoon. The new president Danilo Medina has expressed his desire that all schools change to full day schools. While this is an excellent idea, it is one that will take time and a lot of financial resources. A few schools at a time will be converted to all day schools. COPA Bombita is one of the first schools chosen for this transition. While COPA embraces the idea 100%, they know that it is a process and one that takes time. Since the COPA schools are semi-private and have been built entirely by private funds on COPA's private property, a new contract with the government must be agreed upon in order to accept the government's generous offer of building and COPA must be given a say so in what is to be built. All this requires frequent visits to the capital to meet with the authorities there.

Pictured are Patrick Howell, former director of COPA, Leonardo Luis, director of the Bombita school and Alejandro Matos, representative of the Foundation that oversees COPA. Also shown is Connie Di Leo, new interim director of COPA. Seems like Connie is interviewing the president! Well, it isn't really true, but thought it would be a fun picture taken in front of a video of the president speaking!



### **Newborn Ministry Continues**

Our church in La Hoya continues to visit the newborn wing of the public hospital in Barahona. The ministry consists of giving each mother a gift of baby clothes and other needed baby supplies. More important than this, though, is that we speak a short time about what a blessings from God is their new little one and the importance of raising them up in the truth of the living Christ! It was especially moving as we visited during 'Semana Santa' or Holy Week.



**Semana Santa (Holy Week)**

Holy Week is a huge celebration here in the Dominican Republic, but I always say, "It is far from holy!" It is a bit like the Christmas celebrations in which Christ is not invited! This fact makes our responsibility very great in our church to assure that our members get a real experience as to what Holy Week is really about.

We participated in a retreat with our 'mother church' in Barahona on Maundy Thursday. We held our own Good Friday service having our youth teach the story through drama of the crucifixion. The song they used did take us through to the resurrection so the visitors that came to see the 'drama' also learned the 'end of the story.' We used two youth that frequently visit us as the soldiers and I prayed through the song that they would really listen to the words. The song centers on the soldier who realized that the man they had just crucified was the Christ.



**Christ has risen indeed!**

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General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church

Saturday Morning Prayer and Fast

I have mentioned before how this congregation of youth love early morning prayer vigils so we met from 5 AM until 10 AM in the church. I always wonder what we will do for 5 hours, but the first time I even glanced at my watch, it was already 7. I don't know where the time goes, but it was a wonderful time of prayer, reflection and praise. We ended with a breakfast we held upstairs. I love the Spanish words for this. Fasting is ayuno and breakfast is desayuno. So we celebrated an ayuno followed by desayuno.

## **Día de La Resurrección (Easter)**

I must admit I miss our beautifully orchestrated Easter morning service back in the U.S., but I am doing all I can to instill this kind of celebration in our Easter Sunday morning service. Our youth girls 'Ministerio de danza Adonai' presented a beautiful celebratory dance that expressed the excitement of the resurrection. Our middle school aged girls also worked hard on their presentation. I was pleased with all the effort to express the victory we received through the sacrifice of Jesus! I hope your Easter was as victorious!

