

Paul and Becky - Back in Brazil Sharing Hope in Trying Times



NEW BEGINNINGS - We arrived on September 1 and were greeted by our two daughters and the two grandsons we had not seen for over a year. It felt good and right to get back to our home and people in Bateias. Spring is in the air. The flowers are blooming. People are starting to move from fear to confidence, from isolation to fellowship. We are currently living in the "Little House in the Woods" while we work on remodeling our kitchen and building a closet in our bedroom. How wonderful it is to behold the beauty all around us every day – horses in the pasture; our German Shepherd (thrilled to have us home again); orchids, azaleas and yellow ipê (guayacan) trees in full bloom; mulberry, pitanga (surinam cherry) and yellow plum trees covered with fruit.



Little house in the Woods



Our home and dog



Horses in the pasture



Kitchen Remodel



Drywall buddies



Mulberry tree



Pitanga

It's been fun for us to be back with six of our grandchildren and spend some special moments with them. They love coming out to our place, and we love having them!



DIFFICULT TIMES - The past seven months have been difficult for people all around the world, and Brazil is no exception. Many people have been sick and some have died. During the year we were gone on furlough our congregation in Bateias mourned the loss of six members (none to Covid). Many of our members have been sick with the virus or have family members who were sick. Everyone has felt the effects of not being able to go to church and not having fellowship opportunities in person. Yet, God has been present in every challenge. Everyone has learned new ways of dealing with the difficulties. I think people realize how many Christian privileges they had taken for granted.



Thankfully, we have started having church services once again. But, it's different. We meet with fewer people, wear masks, sit distanced from one another, greet each other without the customary hugs and kisses so much a part of Brazilian culture, and keep the service time down to one hour. Paul and I have been doing many home visits, but we still have not seen everyone. Our elderly members are so thankful for Paul's visits as he brings a devotional, sings a couple of hymns and shares Communion with them. I decided to start up our Tuesday afternoon Ladies' Bible Study group which has been a great blessing to those who participate. Pray for us as we try to reach out and meet needs.

FITTING IN TO THE MINISTRY - In September we met with the local ministry team (Pastors Joel and Fernando) and voiced our desire to be used in ministry as they feel would be most beneficial. At the moment we are in charge of the visitation program and we participate in the regular Sunday services in Bateias and São Braz. As ministries get up and running again, we will fit in where we are needed. Paul has also been cooperating with a ministry to restore drug addicts and alcoholics that was started by Pastor Tom. Although it is located well over an hour from where we live, he has gone weekly to share devotions and converse with the men. He also has been an encouragement to Pastor Tom who has many responsibilities. Besides being the one in charge of the ministry at the Project, he pastors a local church and works as a psychologist (counselor). Pray that these men will discover the grace of Jesus and have their lives transformed eternally.



Pastor Paul and Pastor Tom



Lunch at Rehab Project



Conversation/restoration

ARCA BIBLE CAMP - Many of you know that the ARCA Bible Camp has not been operating since March. In September we met with the Board and elected a new Director to take Carlos' place. Since we have no means to hire someone to fill this role, all the board members willingly offered to help with different aspects of the Director's position as we look to the future and hope to get back to hosting camps and retreats. I will be responsible for the finances, Paul is overseeing maintenance, Alvaro is responsible for the water that we provide for the local neighboring community, and Pastor Fernando will be taking care of the bookings. We will be offering the ARCA for day events only in 2020 and will start booking camps for 2021 in hopes that things will get back to "normal" by then. We are thrilled beyond words for a generous gift we received for the ARCA ministry which will "tide us over" during these months without regular income. This gift also has made an urgent project possible. Recently one of our septic tanks caved in and we are in the process of creating a new holding tank to process the sewage.



PARSONAGE PROJECT - Oh, I almost forgot! The parsonage is now ready and this week Fernando and Bruna moved in! It turned out so nicely! There are still things to finish, but they are so excited and thankful for this wonderful home for them.

Later this month we plan to travel to Campo Mourão for the Annual Conference. This will be a great opportunity to connect with other members of our Free Lutheran family.

It seems like we haven't "skipped a beat" as we jumped back into life and ministry in Brazil. Everything went just fine without us, so we know we are not indispensable. Yet, we believe God has a plan to use our lives in ministry in this place in this later season of our lives as we seek to be faithful to the One who called us and to represent you for Jesus' glory in this country.

We want to thank you for your prayers and support. The gifts of faithful supporters helped us reach our September personal support goal – thanks so much! Together we are making a difference for God's glory.

***"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it to all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."* Col. 3:17**

Love in Christ, Paul and Becky Abel

If you want to contact us: e-mail: paulabelfamily@gmail.com



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