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# Rev. Walter Ries in the Dominican Republic

\$52,500

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Rev. Ries Conducting Confirmation



Rev. Ries Leads Worship



Rev. Ries Leads Devotions At Baseball Camp

The LCMS World Mission began work in the Dominican Republic in 2004 in partnership with other LCMS groups. This unique partnership strives to plant the first congregation of a new church and also address the plight of people there with developmental disabilities. This is an example of a variety of people coming together in partnership to share the Gospel message and to help improve some terrible, inhumane conditions.

LCMS World Mission, LCMS World Relief and Human Care, Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services, Inc., and the Central American Lutheran Mission Society (CALMS) signed a partnership agreement in the fall of 2004 and have placed both a missionary and an outreach worker in the Dominican Republic. The

missionary is the first posted by LCMS World Mission in that Caribbean country. Bethesda provides training and resources for the Home of New Hope, a small, privately funded residential care facility.

In addition to the Home of New Hope project, the partners are working with the Genesis School, a Christian elementary school in Santiago. The students are children who otherwise would not attend school, because many of the students lack a required birth certificate. There is also a Lutheran school, which does some social work focused on people with disabilities. They connect the school's ministry with the church, and great missionary opportunities result.

Rev. Walter Ries, Jr., serves as an Alliance Missionary in the Dominican Republic, through a partnership between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) and LCMS World Mission. Walter has served there since 2005, and his work in several communities throughout the country includes teaching confirmation and theological courses and serving as the pastor in Dominican congregations until national leaders can be trained. He helps provide pastoral training for Dominican vicars as they prepare for pastoral ministry. He and his wife, Ana, live in Santiago.

There are now five missions and the second of five sanctuaries has been constructed. The first Dominican Lutheran pastor was ordained in March 2011 and a protocol document has been signed with Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for the training of seven men for the pastorate in a four-year program. A school has been established with its own Dominican Lutheran principal and 100 students. Attendance is expected to double next year. Last year, Good Shepherd Lutheran Homes was established and serves six children with developmental disabilities. The government is looking at this as a new model for serving children with disabilities, in place of the institutional "warehouse" approach that is currently being used. More than 30 people have been confirmed and become members of the five missions since the beginning of 2011. The goal for the coming year is to begin two more missions in Santo Domingo.

Funding will be used for:

Funding for this project will provide support for Pastor Ries and his wife as they minister to the people of the Dominican Republic and train leaders who will serve in the national church in the years to come.

Prayer needs:

- Pray for the mission in Santiago as it begins to meet in a new locale.
- Pray for the closing of the school year at La Concordia, Palmar Arriba—thanksgiving for the first year of classes!
- Pray for the Group Home and the children living there—Junior, Moises, Francis, Randi, Estefani and Ramona. We thank God for the celebration of their Baptisms on Easter Sunday 2011.