

February 2010



The Haiti Lutheran
Mission Society, USA

The Call

www.haitilutheran.org

Please visit our
website at
www.haitilutheran.org
to see this newsletter in color!

“The Lord will provide....”

Genesis 22:8

Charles Reimnitz, President Emeritus

“Ring around the rosie, pocket full of posies, ashes, ashes, we all fall down!” Some of you are old enough to remember this little ditty from your childhood. Joining our hands we kids would circle one individual chanting these words. All of us would fall to the ground at the conclusion of the words.

Sadly for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Haiti the ‘.all fall down’ applies to houses, hotels, hospitals, and walls alike. The destruction in Port-au-Prince is so overwhelming that Pastor Louis, obviously crushed by the fate of that beloved city with deep sadness, told our Executive Director Dick Buethe that the capital city was gone!

Many of you members of the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, USA (HLMS) have responded with generous contributions. In fact almost two hundred new contributors have joined our ranks in the past few weeks. Your board of directors has responded quickly. Many of your donations have already been sent to help relieve the press-

ing needs in Haiti. Our small society has already sent nearly \$20,000.00 primarily for food, and we are scheduled to release another sum of that size shortly.

Though the HLMS has as its primary task that of saving souls by assisting in the proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ Who poured out His blood to redeem us from our sins, please note that our secondary goal is healing bodies. That is a strong emphasis for us at this immediate moment.

Pastor Louis has told us that he is distributing food to all who come to seek aid, whether members of our mission or not, simply because the need is so great. That’s typical of him. So often when we have told him that he seems to be overreaching for greater goals beyond our ability to raise the resources he responds: “The Lord will provide!”

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Letter From the President



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

The mammoth earthquake in Haiti has dominated all the news coming from this small country. In its wake it is easy to forget what happened before the quake took place. On Sunday afternoon, January 10, 2010, I had the privilege of preaching at the dedication service for the new orphanage in Lilavois. It was a beautiful winter day, and the excitement and enthusiasm of the Haitian people was evident everywhere. Pastor Louis had asked me to preach the sermon, and I was humbled and grateful to do so. I chose for the text Mark 9:36-37, and tried to paint the picture of Jesus holding a little child in His arms, close to His breast. We would do the same I said, holding the little children that Jesus would put in our midst, and doing for them what Jesus Himself would do.

The orphanage was dedicated, and a celebration followed, complete with cake and other treats. The orphanage will house only girls, and will start out with 25-30 residents when we have governmental approval. Its opening will now be delayed because of the structural damage suffered there, but at this point it all appears repairable. I don't think anyone could have been happier than we were that Sunday afternoon.

Of course we had no inkling that 48 hours later the whole area would be torn asunder by the powerful earthquake. There were already many orphans in Haiti, and the orphanage was so needful then, but what about now? Certainly the earthquake has created many more new orphans, so that the need for the orphanage is even greater than it was before. It has been a number of years in coming, but according to God's timing it has come at just the right time.

The Haitian earthquake has been a tragedy to say the least, but I am honored and thrilled that God has given us the opportunity to be His hands and His feet in tending to the needs of not only orphans, but all those in need. Jesus once said, **“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which art in heaven (Mt. 5:16).”** Pastor Louis, all his fellow workers, and all our mission teams pray for this result. We pray that the people will see our good works, not to applaud us, but to glorify our “...Father who art in heaven.”

Already Pastor Louis reports that they had as many as 300 or more worshippers at their Delmas 89 service on January 24. It had to be held outside because the people were afraid to be in the church building, but it was held nonetheless, and God was glorified and praised as well He should be!

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The Call

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All board members of the HLMS are members of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

Our three part mission plan:

Saving Souls
Healing Bodies

Providing accredited Christian education

The Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, USA

PO Box 22544

Lincoln, NE 68542

402-474-2063

“The mission of the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society is to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of the Haitian people so that they might be won by the Holy Spirit to be disciples of Jesus Christ.”

1 Cor. 3:7-15



The Lord Will Provide

Rev. Charles A. Reimnitz, President Emeritus.



(continued from cover)

It is in this spirit that we members of your Board of Directors come to you for your continued assistance, knowing that the “Lord will provide” through you, His faithful servants. We need your support to be able to reach out and provide as much assistance as we can at this crucial time. It may well be that some of those non-members to whom Pastor Louis is extending help may be attracted to the church family of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti and accept Jesus as their Savior.

The HLMS needs your support in the long term. Too often we are caught up in trying to assist during a tragedy, then forget that long, long aftermath of recovery. The “all fall down” mentioned at the beginning of this article applies to the walls around several of our compounds, as well as to the collapsed upper three stories of our main school, and the repairs which will be needed for a number of our church and orphanage buildings. The words of David in which he cries to the Lord; “Build thou the walls of Jerusalem” (Psalm 51;18) come to mind.

This is the aftermath. This is the long term, nitty gritty, grinding work that needs to be done to undergird our work for Christ in Haiti. Will you pledge to join us? I know you will!



Photos Clockwise from above:

Balloons decorate our new orphanage for its dedication. A girl holds balloons at the orphanage dedication celebration. Children gather around a camera to see a photo of themselves.

Dick's Trip Report (January 7-12, 2010)

Dick Buethe, Executive Director, HLMS



I left Lincoln January 6th in a snowstorm, to drive to Omaha for a 6:00 a.m. departure the next morning. I carried with me donated clothing, health kits and auto parts for Pastor Louis. I spent the night in a motel and was driven to the airport very early the next morning. My plane was frozen causing us to depart 1 ½ hours late. This meant that connections were missed in Miami so I arrived in Port au Prince a day late.

I soon joined the rest of my group I was to be with for the dedication of the new orphanage. This group included Pastor Robert Nowak and his daughter Amelia, Jack and Pam Hunter, Bruce and Robin Liviwold, all from the Minneapolis area, as well as Mark Seider and Bill Chandler from Milwaukee. These friends had arrived two days earlier and had been busy painting the new orphanage at Lilavois.

The next day we attended church services and bought 27 five gallon buckets of paint to paint the medical clinic at Lilavois. A team lead by Danielle Tietjen (Minneapolis area) was to arrive on the following Thursday to do this painting. As we all know now, God had other plans for the people and work in Haiti at that time. We attended the dedication of the new orphanage on Sunday January 10th. This service was attended by over 100 people and included several beautiful choirs.

I departed on schedule at 10:00 a.m. on January 12th with an uneventful trip to Miami then on to Dallas. In Dallas I saw on CNN the news of the earthquake in Haiti. I couldn't have been more shocked if I had still been in Haiti. **Thank you all so much for the prayers for my trip and safety.**



Men transport an earthquake victim on top of their car

I left my Heart In Haiti

Amelia Nowak, Cross of Christ Church

There is nothing I look forward to more than my annual trip to Haiti each January. Six of us from Holy Cross each had about 45 pounds of hymnals to pack and some other painting supplies that would be used at the Lilavois orphanage.

Our team worked for three days preparing the orphanage for the January 10th dedication ceremony. There were amazing performances by the various choirs, a sermon from my dad, Pastor Nowak, and a very heartfelt speech written about Elucie, Pastor Louis' wife, a truly amazing woman!

We spent much of Monday and Tuesday taking pictures of students who needed sponsors at Delmas 89 and Caradeux. After completing that task on Tuesday, Leonard drove us up the mountain to have lunch. We arrived back at the hotel around 4:45pm EST. Our group was to have dinner at Leonard's house so we all went to freshen up.

Of course we all know the end of the story. At 4:55pm it happened. Who knew that a 7.0 earthquake would ever hit Haiti? I would be lying if I told you that I wasn't scared out of my mind. In remembering the events of that day, one thing stays in my mind: I had asked Leonard if he was able to get through to his family and he said no. I let it go for a few minutes but then I started to worry about them, so I asked again, "Leonard, did you get a hold of your wife to make sure they are all okay?" And his reply was, "It's okay. I'm not worried because no matter what happens, I know that all Christians are okay." To this day, it still brings tears to my eyes just thinking about it.

Wednesday morning we learned the airport was closed so we decided that we would drive to the Dominican Republic. Leonard drove us up Delmas so that he could get his passport and some gas from his house. During the drive, I couldn't help but think about all of my Haitian friends and whether or not they were alive. Leonard assured me that Wesner was ok. The next person who came to mind was Wylra Silbrun. I asked Leonard if he was ok and Leonard wasn't sure. While driving to Leonard's house, we saw Wylra walking on the street! I was so happy to see him! I immediately started crying when I saw on his wrist a bracelet that I had given him two years ago. It was a rubber bracelet that said, "Jezi Rinmin Mouin" which can be loosely translated to "Jesus Loves Me".

Back on the road, we decided to stop at the US Embassy on our way out of town and they invited us in with open arms. We departed after one of the most emotional goodbyes to Leonard I have ever had.

In the days following the earthquake, I was asked numerous times what the hardest thing was that happened to me. My response has always been the same: having to leave Haiti. If it were safe, I would have loved to stay there and help out as best I could. But it wasn't safe and we had nowhere to stay. I may be home in Minneapolis, but I left my heart in Haiti. I continue to pray everyday for the people of Haiti, and as I do, I remember Leonard's words, "Every Christian will be okay."

Isaiah 41:10 NIV

So do not fear for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.



HLMS missionaries at the dedication of the new orphanage

Front Row: Robyn Lillevold, Amelia Nowak, Pam Hunter, Courtney, Kim Waller

Middle: Mark Seider, Bill Chandler

Back Row: Bruce Lillevold, Robert Nowak, Dick Buethe, Jack Hunter, Keith Waller



Disaster In Haiti

Bruce Lillevold, Cross of Christ Lutheran Church

We had been working long hours for four days preparing for the opening of an orphanage in a remote part of Port Au Prince, Haiti. (Lilavois) The morning of the day of the earthquake, our group identified and photographed several students at two separate church schools that are in need of financial support for their education. Leonard, our Haitian driver, guide and friend had invited us to their home for an evening meal so we returned to our hotel to freshen up first.

We had been at the hotel for about 15 minutes when the earthquake hit. At first it sounded like a large truck was coming down the alley behind our hotel and then it seemed as if that truck hit the back wall of our hotel. My wife Robin, being a California native, immediately identified it as an earthquake. We made our way to the exterior door frame just before the earthquake intensified. The building shook, lifted,

rolled and twisted but stayed mostly intact. There were four foot high waves coming out of the hotel swimming pool and most of the concrete block security walls around the perimeter of the hotel complex collapsed. We could see a large wall of dust and debris heading our way. When the main quake subsided, Leonard left his bus for us in case we needed a safe place to gather, and then left on foot for his home to check on his family. Three of us men went into the alley behind our hotel to see if we could provide aid to anyone. Most of the structures around three sides of our hotel complex and for several blocks down the hill had been destroyed. A large number of people were making their way out of the rubble and into the alley and the remaining roads. One man stopped us and said that five of his family members were in the bottom level of their three level building and asked us to help him. Two of us crawled down in the rubble to the lowest part but the rubble was too heavy and dense to move. We hollered into the small openings but did not get any response. An aftershock caused us to get back to the street level because of the remaining structures still standing were very unstable.

We then continued down the hill where we were met with a large number of Haitians going in all directions. There we saw several dead and injured men, women and children. We were approached by an 18 year old girl, and her 8 year old brother. He had injuries to his head, neck and one side of his ribs, she had an injured knee. We carried the boy and assisted his sister back to our hotel. We then carried a bed mattress, placed it around the pool area and provided as much aid as possible to the young boy and his sister. We stayed with them through out the night and shared what food and water we had with them. The girl told us that she and her brother were in the upper level of their home when the quake hit, that her mother, father and another sibling were in the lower level and she believe they had perished. However, in the morning she walked back to her home and was met by her father who informed her they were all okay. A strong aftershock then occurred and shortly after we saw another wall of dust heading our way and we realized that several more structures must have been destroyed. Since we were unsure if a larger aftershock could strike we carried several additional mattresses out and placed them around the pool area. We also gathered what limited food supplies and water we had in order to distribute only what was needed. A few of us stayed awake throughout the night to provide what protection we could should the need arise. I was able to send a couple of quick text messages to my family before all communication systems failed.

Around 7:30 in the morning, Leonard appeared and informed us that his family members were all okay and that he had limited damage to his home. He said that it would not be safe for us at the hotel as time went on, and he could attempt to take us to the airport. If that was closed he would attempt to drive us to the Dominican Republic, and if that didn't work he suggested we go back to his home and stay with his family. We then traveled to the airport and found that to be heavily damaged and U N Troops were blocking off the area. We traveled to Leonard's to get more fuel and his passport for an attempt at reaching the DR before the roads were closed. It became obvious that things would only get worse in the next few hours. Leo's daughter, a UN employee, said we needed to get to the U S Embassy quickly before the panic and desperation of the survivors intensified.



We arrived at the Embassy around 11:30 a. m. and were escorted inside where our passports were examined and we were told to wait for further instructions. We were there for about 4 hours when we received word that a couple of U S Coast-guard cargo planes had arrived with supplies and would then load about 80 people to be air lifted to a location yet to be determined, or shared with us. Everyone was then directed to complete an application that included a promissory note to the U S Government for all airfare and related expenses or to leave the Embassy and wait until regular air travel was available at the airport. It only took a fraction of a second to make that decision. We were told to wait until all applications had been received and they would call the names of the people picked for the first lifts out of Haiti.

About an hour later we were overjoyed to hear the names of the eight members of our group called and then immediately felt for those Americans whose names were not called. Most of us had not slept since Monday night or eaten since noon the day of the quake and emotions were running very high. A very short time later the people whose names were called were instructed to get into a line and follow an Embassy guard outside where

we were loaded into U N Diplomat suburbans with blackened windows and bullet proof exteriors. A convoy of five vehicles then left at a high rate of speed, heading toward an air base where supplies and several armed forces personnel had been off loaded. We were then loaded into a US Coast-guard C-130 cargo plane and flown to Santa Domingo in the Dominican Republic. We were processed at an Air force base and taken an hour away to a hotel where we were provided rooms and a full buffet dinner. At 6:00 a. m we prepared to be taken two hours away to an airport where we would board an American Airlines jet. What a wonderful site! We arrived back at our home last evening around midnight.



Letter From The President

(continued from page 2)

I have said it before, but I want to say it again, thank you greatly for the kind and generous support you have shown in the face of this earthquake. We have sent upwards of \$24,000 to Pastor Louis for food and medical supplies. At our January 30 board meeting we appointed a committee of five individuals and authorized them to spend up to \$20,000 more as needed for relief efforts. More will be required as we look to rebuild and repair buildings, but we trust our God will provide.

I want to leave you with a true story I told at the end of my sermon at the orphanage. Many years ago, when I was a child, we would drive by a large red brick building on our way home. I would see it time and again. I remember asking my mother, "Mom, what is that building?" She told me it was an orphanage, a place for boys and girls who had no parents. I would press my face against the glass of the car window and wonder what the children inside were doing. What was it like not to have a mother or father? I felt sorry for them. Then one day, when driving by, workers were tearing it down. My heart sank! What about the children? Who would take care of them? Where would they go? I had no answers. But now I see more clearly why I was a witness to all of that, God was getting my heart ready more than 50 years ago to help build another orphanage in another place, another country, but with the same purpose, to take care of the children who have no parents, and to tell them about Jesus. Surely our Lord must have a special place in his heart for them. I know I do, and I strongly suspect you do too! God's blessings to each of you, and by all means, keep praying for Haiti,

Rev. Robert W. Nowak, President

Student Sponsorship

by Rev. Robert Nowak



One of the great blessings we have as a mission society is to educate the young people of Haiti. This education includes not only secular subjects, but Christianity as well. At our schools each student learns about Jesus and His blood bought gift of righteousness. It is an education that has eternal implications. This program has been able to continue because of your sponsorship of students. For many years the amount of a single sponsorship has been \$105.00 per year. Haiti is no different than other parts of the world in that, with time, the cost of everything goes up. As a result, the board of directors at its January 30 meeting voted to increase the cost of a sponsorship to \$130.00 per year. This reflects a very modest increase that amounts to little more than \$2.00 per month. Nonetheless, if this amount proves too much for you there is always the alternative of co-sponsoring a student with a friend or relative. You might want to invite a son or daughter to join you in sponsoring a student. It would be a great way to introduce them to our work in Haiti. And many, many thanks for your sponsorship support in the past.

Marie and Michel, Miracle at the Coconut Villa

Jack Hunter, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Prior Lake, MN



After the quake Bruce Lillevold, Pastor Nowak and I stepped over the collapsed wall around our hotel, The Coconut Villa, and ventured out in the streets to check on neighbors. A man approached Pastor Nowak seeking our help. His wife and children were buried under tons of concrete rubble in the first floor of a 3-story collapsed house. The first story and a half was now pan-caked into about 7 feet. Bruce crawled onto the rubble, calling out to see if there was an answer. There was none. I'm not sure if our feelings of helplessness could have been any greater.

In walking back to the hotel we were stopped by a wailing 18-year old girl and her injured 8-year old brother. Her name is Marie Pierre. She was frightened, dazed, and convinced that this was the second coming of our Lord. She kept crying out, "Jesu, Jesu, Jesu". Marie wanted help for her brother Michel, who had surface lacerations to his face and head and was likely suffering from a concussion. Bruce carried Michel into our hotel grounds and laid him on a chaise lounge at the pool area. Pam Hunter gathered up the team's First Aid kit and dressed Michel's wounds.

Marie, with her few words of English, told us her parents and two brothers were buried in the rubble of the first floor of their collapsed house and were dead. We kept the two of them with us for the next 14 hours. Michel slept and Marie needed constant contact. She asked what would happen to her with no home, no family, no relatives, no clothes, no food, and no money. When Marie started to pray we inquired about her faith. She responded that she was a new Christian, a Catholic. We took turns sitting with her. She asked that we pray over her. We took turns; sitting with her and praying over her. She may have been the most prayed over young lady in all of Haiti that evening.

Pam wrote down the words to "Jesus Loves Me" for her. Many times that evening we sang those words together with her. She wanted continual assurance that we would make sure she was alright before we left. She finally fell asleep about 3 AM and we began to discuss our options for leaving the next day. In the morning Leonard returned from his house and we readied ourselves to leave. We were able to transfer the care of Marie and Michel to Rita Sweet, a missionary from Boston who planned to stay several more days.

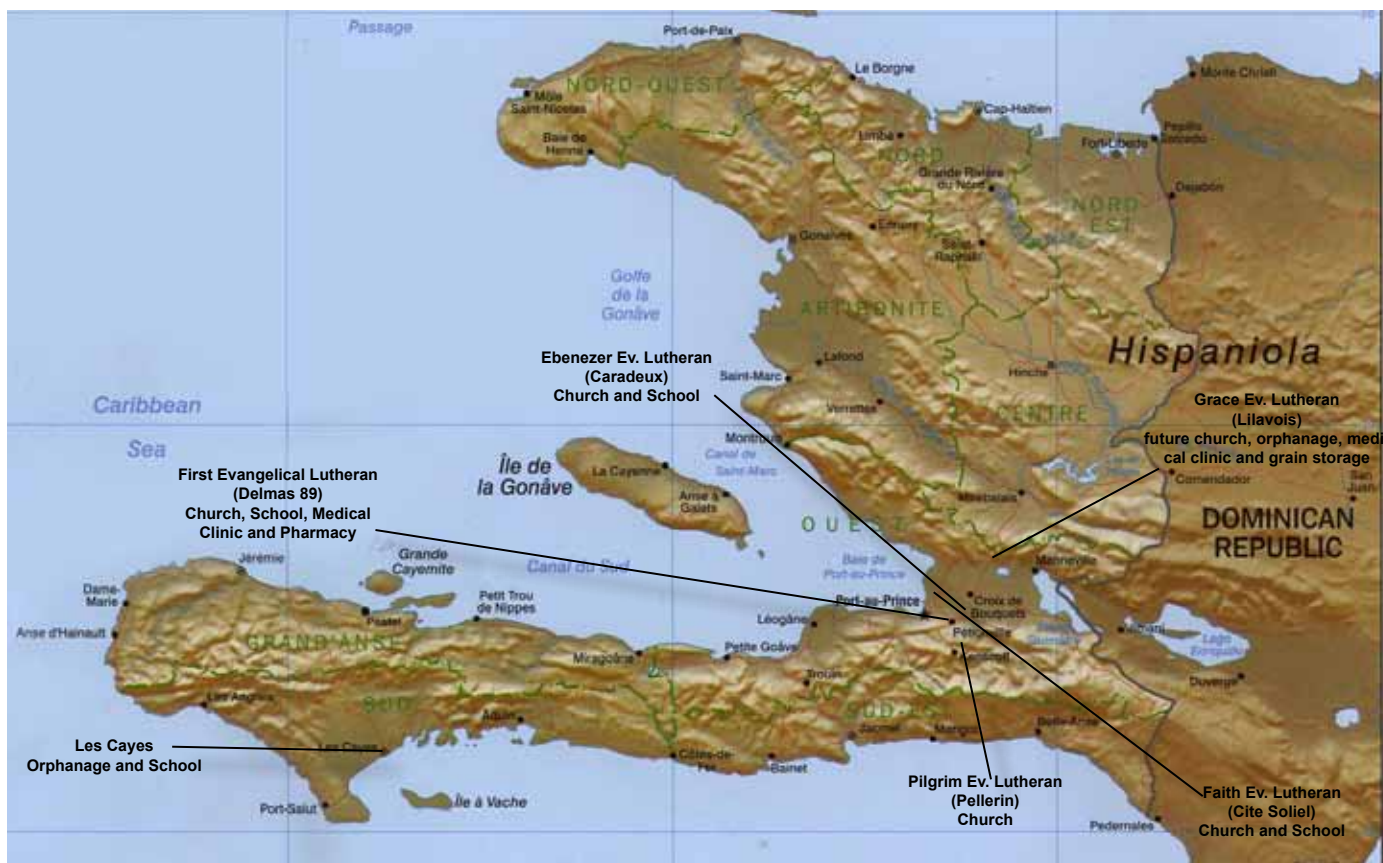


After going to the airport, finding it closed indefinitely, we regrouped back at the hotel. Rita informed us that Marie had left to go back to her house and had left Michel at the hotel. About fifteen minutes later we spotted Marie coming across the hotel grounds. She was wearing one of the biggest smiles we had ever seen. A man was following closely behind her; her father. Her father had crawled out of the rubble of his house. Not only that but their mother and two other brothers were hospitalized but alive. All of our prayers had been answered in a way that we had not considered possible throughout the long night before. God is Good!

Her father was beside himself with gratitude. All he could say was, "Merci! Merci! Merci!"

Marie and her brother

Mission Sites of the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, USA



Planning a trip to Haiti?

Please notify the HLMS of your travel plans to help with our mission work in Haiti at least 60 days prior to your trip. You may contact

Dick Buethe at
(402) 44-3449 or by email at
rnbuethe@yahoo.com

The next meeting of the HLMS Board of Directors will be held on Saturday, May 15, 2010 9:00 AM at the office of Buethe and Associates Insurance 2337 S. 13th Street Lincoln, NE (402) 474-2063

Pray For Haiti (January, 2010)



Praise and Thanksgiving:

1. Praise and thank God for his incredible mercies in sparing our mission staff (Pastor Louis, his family and other Haitian staff workers) and our mission churches (which sustained only minor damage) in and around Port-au-Prince, Haiti through the devastating earthquake.
2. Praise God for sparing lives at all our properties, particularly at our four story school which collapsed at the Delmas 89 location.
3. Thank God for keeping our U.S. mission workers safe (a team from Holy Cross Lutheran, Prior Lake, MN including Rev. Robert Nowak, current President of HLMS, who were in Haiti during the earthquake and two additional men from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.) Many buildings around their hotel were demolished and many people were injured or killed. These people were airlifted to Santa Domingo to fly home.
4. Thank God for keeping HLMS Executive Director, Dick Buethe, safe (he was on his way home from his quarterly trip to Haiti when the earthquake struck.)
5. Thank God for the outpouring of prayers and monetary gifts. What an opportunity to show the great love of God in Christ to so many Haitians in desperate need.

Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for all of our church members, sponsored children, that God would protect them and provide for them (basics such as food and water) through the difficult days ahead.
2. Pray for Pastor Louis and his wife Elucie and for the health and stamina of all of our staff.
3. Pray for healing for all those injured including Wilnand, daughter of the grounds keeper at Delmas 89, who was the only student in the school when it collapsed.
4. Pray for comfort for all those who have lost so many loved ones, homes and all worldly goods. Pray that God would draw them to Himself and provide for both their physical and spiritual needs.
5. Pray for God's wisdom as Pastor Louis and all of our staff move forward to meet the overwhelming needs of so many in and beyond our congregations.
6. Pray that God would bring peace and order to the city of Port-au-Prince so that relief and aid may be easily distributed. Pray that the Gospel of Christ would take root in the hearts and minds of those who do not yet know Him as Lord and Savior.
7. Pray that rubble can be quickly cleared and other properties inspected and repaired so that they might serve as gathering, ministry and places of worship for many. Pray for engineers to come and make these inspections possible.
8. Pray that our churches will be "beacons of light and hope" for those in search of solace, guidance and aid.
9. Pray for wisdom for the Board of Directors and Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, USA, whose purpose is to guide, encourage and support the work in Haiti.

Thank you for your prayers.

HLMS Call

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The Haiti Lutheran Mission Society Needs Your Help!

In order to help us track our readership, please enclose this portion of your newsletter with your financial support or requests for information. This will allow us to make any necessary address changes, forward correspondence and material to you, as well as ensure that we receive your pledge. *Thank you for your continued support and prayers.*

_____ I would like to help sponsor a child to attend school and receive an accredited Christian education for \$130 per year.

_____ I will continue to pray for the HLMS.

_____ I would like to contribute to the HLMS general fund. Enclosed is \$_____.

_____ I would like to pledge a monthly gift of \$_____ to the HLMS.

_____ Please forward additional copies of the HLMS brochure. I need ___ copies.

_____ Please send a copy of The HLMS Call to this address:

(Please make your check payable to the Haiti Lutheran Mission Society, USA)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

(Contributions to the HLMS are tax deductible as allowed by law)