

Christ Church entered a 3 year Covenant Relationship with Reverend Diane Wimberley who is serving in La Paz, Bolivia, the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Diane works in the area of pastoral development and teaching the pastors about Wesley and his beliefs. As part of our Covenant Relationship with Diane, our congregation is asked to surround her with love and prayer, in addition to financial support. In return for that, we get to learn about the people, culture, religious life, and traditions of Bolivia. Here's a report from Diane...

I was in Eucalyptus, some 3 hours from La Paz in the Altiplano. The characteristic I remember the most about this village is that until the district build on there were no bathroom facilities in the town. Everyone sort of used the great out doors when the need arose. Now, however, the Methodist District has a latrine -- big hole in the ground covered by concrete with a toilet set on top. One pours water in when finished.

I had traveled here at the invitation of the women to teach bible during a weeklong workshop on handicrafts -- in particular knitting, crocheting and weaving. Many of the women are dependent upon hand crafts for their livelihood. I had not brought with me anything to knit -- one of the few handicrafts I can do -- so I walked to the market in plaza where the venders display their wares for sale. Everything from puppies to vegetables to dried meat to tools and even knitting needles. I had to walk several more blocks on the dried mud streets to find knitting wool. About an hour later, I returned to the women, sat down, and began to knit. After lunch -- mutton over rice with tomatoes and onions on top -- I began to teach. However, this time it wasn't in a classroom nor a sanctuary, but in the yard, seated upon a canvas tarp, in the middle of the women who continued to knit or crochet. I too, continued my handwork and simply began telling stories about some of the women of the bible: Tamar, Ruth, the midwives who delivered and saved Moses, etc.

After about 3 hours, it was time for me to leave. Many complained that I wasn't staying the night and we set a date in September for me to return. I received many hugs and handshakes as I left.

I suppose in a way teaching the bible in this setting comes the closest to my original understanding of the type of mission work I wanted to do when I first arrived. Finally, I was privileged to do so. I don't know if the women will remember the stories or if they will have any impact. However, I felt blessed by the interaction and the love I received from those present. Thanks soooo much for helping me in my work....