

MISSION NEWS - SEPTEMBER, 2017

Welcome Dori Kay Hjaimarson – Honduras Mission Co-worker

The third generation of Presbyterian pastors called to mission service in her family, Dori is rooted in mission. She was born and raised in the Southwest U.S. border region, a multicultural and multilingual place with longer history in Mexico, Spain and pre-Columbian civilization than in the Anglo United States. She has also spent time living and working in Central Kentucky, a place whose border identity is shaped as much by the Ohio River and Appalachian Mountains as by the U.S. Civil War and the racial and cultural conflicts that go along with it.

As Dori explains, she finds “energy and divine transformation in these border regions” and believes “humans are enriched by recognizing and engaging with our own internal and external borders.” Her commitment to mindfully inhabiting physical and spiritual borderlands enhances her ability to listen actively and reflectively to the people with whom she partners in ministry. Christ’s commitment to social justice inspired Dori’s own sense of purpose:

“The concept of God’s presence among and preference for the poor and oppressed, and not the rich and powerful, is a thread that runs through the entirety of scripture. I believe Jesus Christ’s purpose was to overturn the power structures of his time, and in following Jesus Christ, that is my purpose too. Working in Central America as a white English-speaking Christian, I will be working in a landscape that has been overtly shaped by paternalism and colonialism. I hope that I will not only avoid the old patterns and ruts that these forces have created, but that I will actively take part in forming new patterns and ways of being in relationship.”

It is Dori’s prayer that the church will continue to critically examine its own role in the perpetuation of inequality, racism, and oppression, particularly in the Americas. She prays that Christians, especially white English-speaking Christians, will commit to work that is anti-racist, anti-patriarchal, and antithetical to the dominating mainstream culture of division and fear.

Prior to working with Presbyterian World Mission in Honduras, Dori served as a chaplain in a number of settings. Most recently, she provided spiritual care to hospice patients in their homes and in assisted living facilities. She also served hospital inpatients on a critical care burn unit, and on behavioral health and medical-surgical units.

Dori earned her master’s degree in divinity from San Francisco Theological Seminary. She also trained as journalist at the University of Missouri and has worked as a reporter and editor. Dori’s home presbytery is the Presbytery of Santa Fe, and she is active in Las Placitas Presbyterian Church in Placitas, New Mexico. She is a former member of the First Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Kentucky.



**Dori Kay Hjaimarson,
Honduras Mission Co-worker**

The newly ordained Rev. Hjaimarson will move to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, this fall to begin working in organization, leadership and theological development with the Presbyterian Church of Honduras. Among

many duties, she will serve as the primary Presbyterian World Mission liaison to the Honduras Mission Network, providing in-country experience, as well as coordinating the partnership between the Presbyterian Church of Honduras and the PC(USA).

In Honduras, she will coordinate and coach lay and pastoral leadership in the Presbyterian Church of Honduras as the denomination seeks to strengthen leadership capacity and broaden theological education.

The Presbyterian Church in Honduras consists of 18 Presbyterian churches located in a 60-mile radius of the capital city, Tegucigalpa, that enthusiastically attend church Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday and Sunday. Honduras is a largely mountainous, sparsely populated country in Central America, once the center of the Mayan empire. Throughout most of the 20th century, the country was dominated by military dictatorships, but since the late 1980's democracy has strengthened. The per capita income of the country is one of the lowest in Latin America, having improved slightly since 1990.

Her selection as full-time co-worker was a collective process of discernment with World Mission and the Honduras Mission Network, along with Carlisle, Arkansas, and Tampa Bay presbyteries. These presbyteries will not only continue to support Hjalmarson financially, but also with prayers and accompaniment in many forms.

The position in Honduras is the result of a new approach approved by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board. Before a mission co-worker is sent to serve, at least half of the total funding needed for a 4-year term must be committed in advance as restricted gifts for that position. The mission network, congregation or presbytery will be included as a key constituent in the assessment of the candidate for the position.

“I thank God for Rev. Dori's life and ministry and for the Presbytery of Santa Fe for sharing this gift with the larger Church to participate in God's mission in Honduras,” said Valdir Franca, World Mission's area coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. “These are exciting times for the Church to further the involvement with the Presbytery of Honduras in theological education, new church development, social outreach and deepening partnership.”

Carlisle Presbytery will host Dori November 3rd through the 5th before she begins her work in Honduras. Carlisle Presbytery's Mission Advocacy Committee and Honduras Partnership Subcommittee are blessed to share in this ministry and plan future trips to the country and support for our new mission co-worker.

Please remember our Caribbean neighbors as well as our countrymen in Texas, Louisiana and Florida with donations to the Presbyterian Mission Disaster Relief Fund and local groups who are sending volunteers to the hurricane ravaged areas in the wake of Harvey and Irma.

Remember the special offering for peace next month and the many ways our local congregations share with their neighbors and caring non-profits to serve those in our Presbytery with many and varied needs.