



# Merry Christmas from Connie December 2011

**Iglesia Evangélica Dominicana**  
**Apartado 42 Barahona, Dominican Republic**

## Church Outreach

Volunteerism is not a way of life here in the Dominican Republic yet it is very important to the health of a church. In wanting to teach our members about the importance of helping others we planned a mission work day. There is a small house in the next village that is being used as a small orphanage. They are presently working with five Haitian children but have room for a few more. We spoke with the pastor and he welcomed us with open arms. The boys painted the entire inside of the house while the girls had activities with the children based around the real reason for Christmas. They also made decorations which were later hung in the house to help these children enjoy the Christmas season.

Participating in mission outreach activities was one way God used to touch my heart for others and I hope that these youth will also be touched in this manner. I know they really enjoyed their outreach.



## Christmas Progressive Dinner

I always loved our progressive dinners at Aldersgate so wondered how it might go over here. Well, my congregation thought I was a bit crazy when I was telling them about it but it was a huge success and they loved it. The dinner was a bit easier here as we didn't have to drive from house to house, instead we only had to walk. Everyone who was coming committed to help in one of the four houses as I explained that was part of the fun, working together to prepare for the others. We had appetizers at Rosalba's house, then off to Francia's house for soup, then to Sylvias for – what else – rice and beans with chicken and we ended up upstairs in the church for games and dessert. Everyone loved it and said we must do this every year! The candles in the picture were not just for effect, we had no electricity and that was the only light we had! The flash belies the reality.



## Sunday School Christmas Party



Christmas parties are always looked forward to by the children. These children are no exception and maybe more so since so few gifts are given in this culture due to the lack of economic ability to do so. In some ways this is very nice but for children who have so little, it is really special to receive even a small gift. First, of course, Nairobi told them the story of baby Jesus and they sang a number of children's Christmas songs like my little burro who is going to Bethlehem, then they made a plate with the nativity picture and star on it. Afterwards came the punch and then the long awaited for gift and to finish it off a bag of candy.



**Early Morning**

We started Saturday off at 5 AM with a candlelit prayer time. No lights were turned on but the church grew lighter with each participant as they lit a candle on the altar upon their arrival. It was a wonderful effect and showed how we are so much stronger together and that our prayer and faith helps make the world a brighter place.

### **Outdoor youth service by bonfire**

We are always looking for new ways to attract youth to the church so this Saturday we invited them to a bonfire and had the service in front of the church. Following the service we went upstairs and played games in our 'youth club.' All who came to the service were invited and soon even a grandmother was involved in a serious game of Jacks!



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