

The focus of the Latinx mission effort this past year has been to establish relationships with local store owners, restaurants, and bakeries, by frequenting their businesses and entering into relationships with them – not mentioning our church yet - just building relationships. From some of these discussions, we learned that many of those who are Hispanic in our area need to stay under the radar. For that reason, we shifted our focus and prioritized finding those agencies that help with documentation and status concerns and learn from them how to serve our Latinx neighbors while not putting them at risk of exposure or deportation. That work will continue into 2024.

A bright spot in Latinx ministry development in 2023 is La Misa (the Mass) an innovative pilot program at St. Paul's, Carondolet through TryTank and under the supervision of The Rev. Rebecca Ragland. This grant supported program offers La Misa events the second Sunday of each month. We celebrate the initiative, creativity, and inclusivity of St. Paul's in this effort!

Much of the activity in the Latinx Ministry this year has been tied with the development of our new companion relationship the Diocese of Puerto Rico, meeting, praying, and supporting the reception of a delegation from the Diocese of Puerto Rico to our diocese in early October. Then The Rev. Dr. Valori Mulvey Sherer, Diocesan Latinx Missioner headed to the Diocese of Puerto Rico to learn from them specifics needed to consider in developing Latinx engagement here where the Spanish-speaking population is small (about 4%), growing (up 40% in the last decade), younger, and predominantly professional. While there may not be a lot of Latinx neighbors to serve now, there will be, and as a church we can be making ourselves ready now.

To make ourselves ready, the diocesan Latinx Ministry has a goal for all churches in the Diocese of Missouri to learn to speak at least one thing in Spanish for use at the Sunday Eucharist. This is an effective tool of evangelism welcoming our Latinx hermanas y hermanos (sisters and brothers) to worship with us. To that end, the diocesan Latinx Ministry webpage contains links on the Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month (right side menu) with liturgy translations complete with audio files so you can hear them, of the Offertory Sentence, the Peace, the Sign of the Cross and the Spanish Sanctus, Santo, Santo, Santo for all church to begin to use now.

Finally, we have jointly worked with our new Diocesan Missioner for Youth, The Rev. Erin Pickersgill, and the Formation & Families Coordinator at Emmanuel, Webster Groves, Katie Gregston, to establish a youth "reconnaissance" mission trip to Puerto Rico this December to scout out the opportunities and locations for future youth mission trips.

We are currently forming a Latinx Ministry Advisory Committee. If you would like to serve on this committee in 2024, please contact Valori+.

Dios nos bendiga a todos mientras continuamos sirviendo en el nombre de Jesús. God bless us all as we continue to serve in Jesus' name.)