

## BLESSED HOLIDAYS!

We pray that you all had a very blessed Christmas celebration and that the New Year 2011 may hold many wonderful things in store for you! We were able to be together as a family for a few days in Mexico City. Daughter Elizabeth and her husband Matt came down to visit, though they left before Christmas to spend it with Matt's family, and then daughter Monica arrived to spend almost a month with us. During the few days in which all five of us were together, we had the opportunity to take a family portrait. This newsletter was a little delayed since we wanted to share the picture with you, but we didn't get the proofs in time to send it earlier. We had a wonderful Christmas Eve service at our church, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, and also have been able to spend some time with Alicia's family here in Mexico. In addition, we were able to travel outside of the city for a couple of days as a family, going with Matt and Elizabeth to San Miguel de Allende and then with Elizabeth and Monica to Acapulco.



## CLOSE OF FALL SEMESTER

The Fall semester at the Theological Community and the Lutheran Seminary ended on December 17. The closing chapel service for the semester was led by the students from my Liturgy class, who did a number of creative things around the Christmas theme. The students led the group in painting a Christmas tree by imprinting their painted hands on a large sheet of paper, and then decorating it with paper ornaments on which those attending had written down the gift they wished to give to the baby Jesus. They also made a manger scene in which the poor and outcasts of our society today replaced the shepherds visiting the baby Jesus in the stable. Jeremías Pérez, one of the students from my Homiletics class, gave the sermon.



## REDEEMING THE GOSPEL

In late October, my latest book came out, titled "Redeeming the Gospel: The Christian Faith Reconsidered" (Fortress Press, Minneapolis). This book is an attempt to rethink how we present the gospel of Jesus Christ today in the face of the new realities and contexts in which we find ourselves. It is written from a Lutheran perspective, yet takes into account the advances in biblical scholarship in recent decades to suggest ways in which we can remain faithful to the message of Scripture while at the same time revising and renewing our Lutheran tradition so as to proclaim a gospel that promotes wholeness and well-being for all.

## HOW SAFE IS MEXICO?

One of the questions we have been asked most frequently concerns the violence in Mexico. Many wonder how safe we feel here. There has indeed been a considerable rise in violence in some areas of Mexico, but the vast majority of this has been in places where the drug cartels are battling amongst themselves and with the Mexican army. This includes especially northern Mexico, near the U.S. border areas, and on the Mexican west coast. For the most part, places such as Mexico City and the vast majority of tourist areas have not been greatly affected. We certainly felt as safe as ever traveling these past few days. So while there are certainly places that one should avoid, and while precautions are always in order wherever one goes, we feel just as safe as most people who live in big cities elsewhere in the world.



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**(Or go to [www.aokelca.org](http://www.aokelca.org), the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod website, and click on "Links")**

**E-mail: [dabrondos@gmail.com](mailto:dabrondos@gmail.com)**

## FELIX'S GUITAR

As I shared in our last newsletter, some of the donations we received during our congregational visits last summer in response to my presentation regarding Felix and Roberto were used to feed homeless people in Mexico City. With the help of Roberto and other members of their church, Felix used the funds to make tortas (Mexican sandwiches) and then distributed them to street people over the period of several weeks. In itself, that was a very transforming experience for those who participated. As "payment" for Felix's time and efforts in doing this, a guitar was purchased to give to Felix so that he could continue his guitar lessons under Roberto and accompany the music at their church. On November 21, we presented the guitar to Felix, who was surprised and thrilled! It was a special day not only for Felix but for all the congregation. For more information on this wonderful story, see my website.



Some of the members of Roberto's church.