

SAMS
IRELAND

South American Mission Society



JESÚS EL SALVADOR



Photos from the new CeFA centre N. Argentina



Buena Vista

SUMMER
EDITION 2024

MISSIONAL / RELATIONAL / INTENTIONAL

MISSION DIRECTOR WRITES:



CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN: A DIVINE PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

In Philippians 3:20, the Apostle Paul writes, "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." This verse provides a profound reminder of our true identity and destination as Christians. Recently, I embarked on the arduous process of applying for a visa on behalf of my son. The level of detail required and the expense involved highlighted the complexities of earthly citizenship. It demanded determination and perseverance. This experience prompted me to reflect on our heavenly citizenship, a divine gift that contrasts sharply with the bureaucratic challenges of earthly citizenship.

The process of obtaining earthly citizenship or a visa is often fraught with difficulty. It requires extensive documentation, financial resources, and sometimes, seemingly endless waiting. In contrast, our citizenship in heaven

has been graciously granted through faith in Jesus Christ. There is no bureaucratic red tape, no exhaustive list of requirements, and no fees to pay. It is a gift freely given by the grace of God through the sacrifice of His Son. As Christians, we can rest in the assurance that our heavenly citizenship is secure, not because of our efforts, but because of His love and mercy.

The missionaries of the past understood the significance of this heavenly citizenship. They carried the message of Christ with them wherever they went, demonstrating through their lives that they served a higher kingdom. They brought hope, love, and the good news of salvation to many, embodying the principles of the kingdom of heaven. Their determination and unwavering faith in the face of adversity serve as a powerful example for us today.

As we navigate the challenges and demands of earthly life, we must remember our higher calling. Our actions, words, and attitudes should reflect our allegiance to the King of Kings. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." This is the evidence of our heavenly citizenship - living lives that point others to Christ.

The challenge before us is clear: would there be enough evidence in our lives to make

people believe that we serve the King of Kings? Are we living in a way that reflects the values of the kingdom of heaven? As we await our Saviour, let us strive to live with the same determination and purpose as those who have gone before us, bearing witness to the grace and glory of our heavenly citizenship.

Your friend in Christ

Stephen

Rev Stephen McElhinney
Mission Director, SAMS Ireland



BRIDGING CONTINENTS: MAX DIAZ'S VISIT TO FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE AND LOCAL CHURCHES

In the brisk early days of February this year, SAMS Ireland welcomed a special guest from the vibrant city of Santiago, Chile. Max's visit lasted from January 30th to February 8th and was filled with enriching encounters and significant connections. His visit not only bridged geographical distances but also forged bonds of collaboration and understanding between distant church communities.

Max's itinerary was brimming with engagements that revealed his multifaceted role as a speaker, mentor, and facilitator. From the SAMS Annual evening conference Friday Night Live event to quieter coffee sessions, Max left an indelible mark on those he encountered. As the main speaker on February 2nd, he captivated congregations with his insightful messages, igniting conversations that transcended borders.

One of the highlights of Max's visit was the fostering of links between the Santiago Diocese (Chile) and the Diocese of Down and Dromore. This developing connection promises mutual growth and cooperation, laying the groundwork for shared

endeavours in the future. During some of his stay, Max was hosted by Donaghcloney and Waringstown Parishes. The Rev. Mark Lennox provided further opportunity for engagement and the nurturing of relationships that will endure beyond his departure.

Max's extensive experience in discipleship and leadership mentoring programmes proved invaluable during his interactions in Ireland. Having mentored numerous apprentices in Santiago, his insights resonated deeply with those seeking to cultivate similar initiatives within the Church of Ireland. His experiences serve as a source of inspiration, guiding the development of similar robust discipleship frameworks.

Moreover, Max's visit facilitated strategic partnerships, particularly with the Down and Dromore Diocese. Discussions with key representatives and a meeting with the Diocesan Mission Committee, paved the way for future collaborative ventures and intentional leadership training programmes. These synergies signify a new chapter of cooperation, driven by a shared commitment to advancing God's kingdom especially through church planting initiatives.

The support extended by SAMS Ireland played a pivotal role in orchestrating Max's visit and nurturing the burgeoning relationship between the two dioceses. Their support underscores the significance of cross-cultural exchanges in fostering unity and mutual edification within the global Church.

As Max bids farewell to Belfast and Ireland, his impact reverberates beyond the confines of geographical boundaries. His visit has cultivated seeds of friendship, understanding, and shared vision, which will continue to flourish in time to come. Through his presence and ministry, Max Diaz has exemplified the transformative power of genuine connection and collaboration in building God's kingdom.

Max Diaz at Friday Night Live (Feb 2024)



Bishop David McClay and Rev Mark Lennox with Max Diaz at Down and Dromore mission committee



Max Diaz (Santiago) with Stephen McElhinney (SAMS Ireland)



EXPLORING CROSS-CONTINENTAL CONNECTIONS:

BANGOR PARISH CHURCH WELCOMES TEAM FROM SALTA, ARGENTINA

In late January 2024, Bangor Parish Church buzzed with the warmth of camaraderie and the excitement of cultural exchange as it welcomed a team of six visitors from Salta, North Argentina. Their journey, though fraught with challenges including a stormy sea crossing, culminated in a week-long immersion into the heart of Northern Ireland's church life.

This visit led by Vicar General Daniel Lescano, was not merely a casual encounter but the fruit of a longstanding partnership between Bangor Parish Church and the Anglican Church of San Andres. Over recent years, the

relationship has blossomed, fostering regular termly Zoom prayer sessions where leaders shared encouragement and prayed for one another.

Upon their arrival, the Argentine team wasted no time delving into the local church scene. They exchanged stories of church planting with South Lisburn Community Church, offering insights from their recent endeavours in neighbourhood outreach back home. Daniel Lescano's meeting with some church leaders from Connor diocese heralded

exciting prospects, including the initiation of the Church Leaders training Program 'CeFA,' which promises to equip leaders from the Chaco region with invaluable training opportunities.

Throughout the week, the visitors immersed themselves in Bangor's church activities, relishing shared meals and participating in ministry endeavours. Beyond church walls, they savoured some of Northern Ireland's tourist attractions and sampled local delicacies, relishing the cooler climate that offered respite from the scorching temperatures of their homeland.

Sunday services proved to be a highlight, with Daniel Lescano delivering enlightening talks and fostering fellowship over communal meals. For three members of the Argentine team, this trip marked their first trip to the UK, deepening their appreciation for global church partnerships.

As the week drew to a close, the visit stood as a testament to the enriching potential of cross-continental connections. Bangor Parish Church's embrace of the Salta team exemplifies the power of cultural exchange and collaborative ministry. For those inspired to forge similar links, the invitation stands open—just contact the SAMS office for more information.

More Connections! : Volunteer Olivia visits Salta.

Inspired by the visit of a team from Salta, North Argentina, to Northern Ireland earlier this year, volunteer Olivia Agnew, set off on a transformative journey to Salta in May. Building upon the initial friendship forged during the Salta team's visit to Lisburn, Olivia plans to complete a three-month (May to Aug) stint in Salta, immersing herself in the vibrant life of the Anglican Church San Andres.

During her stay, Olivia will work alongside the church in various capacities, contributing to the ongoing church plant and participating

in community outreach efforts. Additionally, she will have the privilege of visiting the Chaco region, further deepening her understanding of Argentine church life.

Pray for Olivia today:

1. Pray for Olivia's ongoing safety and health as she navigates unfamiliar terrain and immerses herself in new experiences.
2. Pray for wisdom and discernment as Olivia engages in ministry activities, that she may be guided by the Holy Spirit in all she does.

Olivia's volunteering exemplifies the power of personal connections in fostering global partnerships and advancing the mission of the church. Her journey not only strengthens ties between Ireland and North Argentina but also embodies the spirit of unity and collaboration that transcends borders in Gospel mission.



Bangor Parish with Team from Salta, North Argentina (Daniel, Flavia, Sophie, Paula, (front-Dario and Alejandro)



Olivia Agnew

ANGLICAN CENTRE FOR FORMATION, CEFA

As I write about our newly formed Anglican Centre for Formation, CeFA, I'm reminded that the 10 Amerindian students in Ing. Juárez are wrapping up their third block of classes. Tonight and tomorrow, they will be making their way back to their communities spread across northern Argentina. They'll spend a week reconnecting with their families and local congregations before returning for another two-week block of studies.

We're thrilled to have launched this new centre in March 2024. The centre was created to address the issue of Bible poverty in the region and the loss of over 80 pastors and leaders during the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While recognising the need for increased Bible knowledge and theological reflection, CeFA emphasizes three key areas: Conocimiento (Knowledge), Carácter (Character), and Capacidad (Abilities and gifts). In addition to formal classes, students participate in practical tasks in small teams. This can include preparing meals for the group, cleaning dormitories, or maintaining the grounds. Community life



is both challenging and character-building. These experiences are supported by biblical reflection in regular meetings with Rev. Narciso. Sánchez (Director), Rev. Daniel Lescano, (Vicar General), and the entire Ministry Formation team.

The teaching team faces its own challenges, as many of the students have minimal formal education and come from oral learning traditions rather than text-based ones. Classes are in Spanish and not Wichi or Toba, which adds to the challenge both for the students and the teachers. However, these students, recommended by their bishops and pastors, possess a profound desire to learn and be transformed, understanding the privilege of being among the 10 selected for this experience.

Pray with us for the ongoing development of the centre. Building work on the classroom block is still in progress. Pray for the logistics of the students travel to and from their communities each fortnight. Pray that each course will be taught and presented in a way that impacts the students.

Priscilla Breekveldt



NAVIGATING MISSION: THE ROLE OF ASSOCIATION OF MISSION SOCIETIES (AMS)

In the intricate nature of modern mission, the Association of Mission Societies (AMS) stands as a beacon of collaboration. Within the framework of the Church of Ireland umbrella, AMS brings together an array of mission agencies, fostering mutual support and encouragement. At the heart of AMS lies a commitment to navigate the evolving landscape of mission work, addressing challenges while upholding the values of transparency and governance.

One of the cornerstones of AMS's mission is to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among its members. SAMS Ireland plays its part by actively engaging with various mission societies under this Anglican umbrella. From Church Mission Society Ireland to TearFund, from Christian Aid to the Mission to Seafarers, AMS boasts a rich tapestry of member organisations dedicated to serving communities at home and abroad.

In recent years, the mission field has become increasingly complex, marked by shifting societal attitudes towards religion and heightened scrutiny of charitable activities. Against this backdrop, AMS plays a crucial role in providing a platform for its members to address these challenges collectively. By fostering a culture of collaboration AMS equips its members to navigate the intricacies of governance while maintaining the integrity of their missions.

Moreover, AMS is committed to nurturing the next generation of mission leaders. Through initiatives like the Mission Awareness Training for curates and participation in Theological Institute preaching programme, AMS ensures that future church leaders are equipped with further tools and networks.

These platforms not only provide valuable learning opportunities but also serve as forums for building connections and fostering collaboration among theological students and mission practitioners.

As AMS continues to chart its course in the ever-evolving landscape of missions, its commitment to collaboration remains its strength. By harnessing the collective unique Gospel callings of its member organisations and equipping future leaders, AMS continues to make a lasting impact in the world of local and international mission.



EXPLORING FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP:

A JOURNEY TO PERU WITH THE CHURCH OF IRELAND

In the bustling streets of Lima and the more serene foothills of Arequipa, a group of church leaders from the Church of Ireland embarked on a mission trip that transcended borders, cultures, and denominations. Led by the mission director of SAMS Ireland and three seasoned church leaders, this journey was not just a physical exploration but a spiritual odyssey, rich with learning, sharing, and fellowship.

At the invitation of Bishop Jorge of Peru, the Irish delegation found themselves immersed in a vibrant exchange of leadership experiences. Over the course of two days, seminars were held covering a spectrum of topics crucial to effective ministry:

evangelism, preaching, strategy and vision, discipleship training and self care. These sessions were not just about imparting knowledge but about fostering a deeper understanding of how faith is lived and shared in different contexts.

The contrast between the bustling metropolis of Lima and the ancient city of Arequipa provided a unique backdrop for this journey. In Lima, the group had the opportunity to visit local churches, experiencing firsthand the dynamic expressions of faith within the Peruvian Anglican community. From Peruvian set liturgies to more contemporary worship,

they witnessed the diverse mosaic of worship styles that enrich the global church.

In Arequipa, nestled in the foothills of the Andes, the group delved deeper into the heart of Peruvian culture. Sampling local cuisine, immersing themselves in customs, and forging friendships with local pastors, they gained invaluable insights into the joys and challenges of ministry in a vastly different context.

But beyond the cultural exchange, this journey was about building bridges of fellowship and solidarity within the worldwide church. As the Irish leaders engaged with their Peruvian counterparts, they discovered a shared commitment to serving God and His people, despite the geographical and cultural distances that separated them.

SAMS Ireland extends heartfelt gratitude to the Anglican Church in Peru for their warm hospitality and invaluable assistance in organising this transformative journey. The impact of this experience reverberates far beyond the confines of national borders, enriching the lives of all involved and

One of the seminars with the team in Peru
Front: Rev Victor Condori, Rev Stephen McElhinney, Rev Rosie Diffin, Rev Dorothy Dunwoody, Rev John White, and Penny de Marces



deepening their understanding of God's work in the world.

Indeed, interaction with the worldwide church is a profoundly enriching experience for any leader. It broadens perspectives, challenges assumptions, and fosters a deeper appreciation for the diverse manifestations of God's love and grace. As the Irish delegation returns home, they carry with them not just memories of Peru but a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper commitment to serving God's kingdom wherever they may be called.

Church leaders at the seminars in Lima



Church leaders at the seminars in Lima



ESPERANZA FOSTER HOME

When the Esperanza Foster Home opened in Asuncion in 2005, the State authorities gratefully entrusted us with 5 little girls. We now have the opposite situation, as the start of this year saw 5 little boys being cared for. Then in mid-January the 5 became 6 when a 2-week-old baby boy arrived! Decisions need to be made by the courts about their future but this process can take years so it is important that they can be cared for in a family type environment so that they can thrive. The Bible verse that the project has always felt was significant is **Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future".**

It's a privilege, therefore, to be part of God's work in this way and Ana Maria, who leads the project, is excited about a recent development. Practitioners from a local speech therapy practice are keen to support the home. They have evaluated the 5 toddlers and will be visiting them regularly to carry out specially tailored

programmes. As research increasingly shows us, a child's early years are very significant to their development so the extra help will prove especially valuable.

In February, the Paraguayan team were particularly grateful for the funds that SAMS Ireland were able to send as they weren't sure if they could continue. During the Covid years it had not been possible to put on the usual fundraising events in Paraguay so reserves were low. They are now busy organising a fundraising lunch to take place in May and they have managed to get some great prizes for an auction and a raffle.

Prayers would really be appreciated around the house where the little boys are cared for. It has been put up for sale which is unsettling and may mean a search for new premises.

Along with the boys playing in their baths, the photo below also shows Juana who was the main foster mum in 2005 and, after a short break, is now back working full-time with the children.

Thank you for your support, Penny Metcalfe.

MEET THE COUNCIL - GRAHAM HARE



One of my favourite truths about the Church of Christ is that it is both local and global. Local in our gathering for worship, our sharing in fellowship and our support of one another. Global in our shared commission, our growth as disciples and our hope in Christ.

As I minister in Omagh, I am humbled and thankful that I am connected to a global church that proclaims the same truth of the Gospel. That is one of the reasons that I am so pleased to serve on SAMS General Council, as it gives me a healthy perspective on the commission of Jesus, which calls us to go to the ends of the earth with the good news of his salvation.

I am married to Hannah who taught in Colegio San Andres in Asuncion 20 years ago and now, in this season, we continue to keep the connection alive and seek to encourage our local church to be engaged and active in global mission.

SAMS is part of our story and the church in South America holds a special place in our hearts. It is a joy, through my connection with SAMS, that I can encourage a local church here in Northern Ireland and, at the same time, encourage the global church as we seek to release and support mission so that all might have the opportunity to know Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

PRAYER POCKETS

In Matthew 9:38 Jesus highlighted to his disciples a challenge of his time, which is still very much a challenge today "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few."

What he says next is really interesting and reveals a lot about what Jesus saw (and sees) as being key in mission and ministry - "therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest." There are so many things Jesus could have told them to do, but **earnest prayer** was at the top of his list.

In SAMS, we are very aware that this is the Lord's work and mission, and we need Him at every step. We are so thankful for those who pray faithfully with and for us and the work of SAMS and the church in South America, and it is our heart's desire that prayer will continue to be at the heart of all we do. We pray that God will continue to raise up prayer warriors. With this in mind we are in the middle of preparing

a new venture which will begin in the autumn- 'Prayer Pockets.'

Prayer Pockets will be informal meetings, where a group of people in different parts of the province will get together (probably bimonthly) for fellowship and to pray for mission and especially for God's people and church in South America. Prayer materials will be provided to the groups by SAMS. In September 'Prayer Pockets' will be starting up in 3 areas namely -

Ballymoney
Saintfield
Omagh

If you would like to join one of these groups, find out more, or think about hosting or being part of a 'Prayer Pocket' in another part of the country, please contact the SAMS office (details at the back of the magazine.)

Thank YOU for all your ongoing support and prayers.

FUSION: BRIDGING CONTINENTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES

For two decades, FUSION, an initiative by SAMS Ireland, has been fostering a vibrant exchange between the South American and Irish churches, transcending borders and enriching communities. This volunteer programme places young, mission-minded individuals from South America into various church contexts across Ireland for an academic year, creating a tapestry of cultural exchange and spiritual growth.

The impact of FUSION extends far beyond its duration, leaving an indelible mark on both the volunteers and the local churches they serve. Through their presence and participation, these volunteers infuse fresh perspectives, dynamic energy, and a deep sense of global interconnectedness into the fabric of Irish congregations.

One of the hallmark benefits of FUSION is its role in heightening awareness of the worldwide church. By facilitating direct engagement with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, FUSION fosters a

deeper understanding of the global Body of Christ, inspiring empathy, solidarity, and collaborative action.

Over the years, FUSION has nurtured numerous leaders within the church. Many participants have gone on to assume various forms of church leadership, their FUSION experience serving as a pivotal catalyst in discerning their calling. By exposing them to different contexts, challenges, and opportunities, FUSION equips volunteers with invaluable skills, resilience, and a broader perspective essential for effective leadership in today's interconnected world.

For those intrigued by the transformative potential of FUSION, the invitation to learn more awaits at the SAMS office. If you are a local church eager to embrace the richness of cross-cultural exchange, FUSION offers a pathway to deeper engagement, mutual enrichment, and the realisation of God's expansive vision for His Church. For more information contact SAMS Ireland : office@samsireland.com



Carla Marin, Chile
(Sligo-2021)



Tammy Irene, Paraguay
(Sligo 2022)



Marcos Zavala, Chile
(Lisburn 2023)

WHAT'S NEW?

Date For The Diary - 19th October 2024: A Mission Coffee morning will be held at the T3 conference centre, (House of Vic-Ryn, Moira Road, Lisburn) on Saturday 19th October from 10.30 - 12.00. This will be an informal get together with fun, coffee, chat, mission updates and prayer. We would love to see you there! More details will be available closer to the time, but feel free to contact the SAMS office at any time to book your place.

New Arrival: Congratulations to Luke and Penelope Pratt on the birth of their daughter Elyse Sophie and to Emily who is now a big sister. Luke, Pen and Emily returned to Ireland from Chile last year and are currently serving

God in Sligo. We continue to pray for them.

WhatsApp Group: If you would like to be part of a SAMS WhatsApp group (administrator only) to get prayer requests and notices about SAMS events or activities, please contact the office. Our details can be found at the back of the magazine.

Floods in Brazil. We continue to pray for Brazil in the aftermath of the catastrophic floods that have claimed over 150 lives and left hundreds of thousands of people displaced.

Big sister Emily with baby Elyse



GET IN TOUCH!

- IF YOUR CHURCH WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HAVING A VISIT FROM A SAMS IRELAND SPEAKER
- IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CHAT MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING OVERSEAS
- IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT FUTURE POSSIBILITIES WITH MISSION TEAMS
- IF YOUR CHURCH WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE FUSION PROGRAM

WE WOULD LOVE TO CHAT FURTHER ABOUT HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED IN MISSION!



LEGACIES

SAMS is extremely thankful for legacies which are left by individuals for the benefit of the work in South America. Legacies can make a real difference to the ongoing work and the extension of God's Kingdom. Thank you for partnering with us. For further information in confidence contact the SAMS House.

Thank you for being part of the SAMS team. If we can serve you in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

SAMS House

1 Irwin Crescent, Lurgan, Craigavon, Northern Ireland, BT66 7EZ

T: 028 3831 0144 **E:** office@samsireland.com

W: www.samsireland.com **F:** www.facebook.com/samsireland1