

## ***Report from the Creole Church***

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This is an update for you on the happenings with the Creole congregation. We have two committees and different groups that meet regularly. These are the Youth Fellowship, the Young Adult Fellowship, the choir, prayer group and Bible study group. We are planning to start up an amen's group in the next few weeks. I am starting confirmation classes on March 6th, which will run until Palm Sunday. We also have a large Sunday school.

All of these groups operate independent of each other and one of my challenges is to find ways to integrate them more.

We still have two services each Sunday however the morning service is poorly attended. The elders and I have discussed this but as of yet have not figured out a way to improve it.

All of these groups are faithful in their attendance in the group activities but not necessarily in church on Sunday.

The future of this church is uncertain, at least uncertain in the current form of operations. The cultural reality is that students are learning Spanish in school and they speak Spanish with all their friends. Currently there are many youth in the youth group that do not speak English. I am starting confirmation next week and at least two in that group do not speak any English. My thoughts are that within 20 years Spanish speakers will dominate this congregation or it will die. The reality is that many Creole people also speak Spanish. I think it is true of the whole church (not just my congregation) that we have not come to terms with the fact that this is a trilingual church. So rather than celebrating the differences people tend to retreat on hold on tight. Don't take this as a criticism because in the United Church we struggled with this issue for several years and only in the past ten years have we come to terms with it and now recognize ourselves as a bilingual church. My hope for this congregation and the Moravian church in Bilwi is that we will move from separation to more integration. I think this is the hope for the future of my congregation.

On a more personal level I am enjoying my time here with this congregation. I am starting to feel more like the pastor. I am grateful to Rev. Stedman Bent who helped me get accustomed to worship differences and has been a good support. Don is also feeling more settled and is enjoying the challenge of working at ADSIM.

Rev. Deborah Elliott