



June 15, 2006
Chapala
Ron and Mary Harrington



Ever hear of Chapala before? Lake Chapala is about 50 miles (75 kilometers) long and 12.5 miles (20 kilometers) wide and is the largest inland body of water in Mexico as well as the third largest in Latin America.

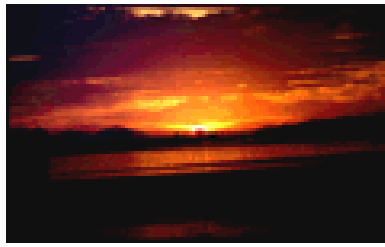
Chapala is located on the north shore of Lake Chapala, 26 km. (16 mi.) east of the Lake's western end, and 42 km. (25 mi.) south of Guadalajara. It is the oldest, most populated, and the most easterly of a string of villages - Chapala, San Antonio Tlayacapan, Ajijic, San Juan Cosala and Jocopetec - known locally as Lakeside.

It is rated by National Geographic as having the 2nd best climate in the world.

Its altitude is 1530 meters (5020 feet). Its average temperature is 19.9 degrees C (68 degrees F).

There are an estimated 40,000 people living in the Chapala/Ajijic area, and many of them are North Americans. Many of the expats (One who has taken up residence in a foreign country) live in Vista del Lago, a suburb five minutes away, with one of the area's largest golf courses.





During my trip to Guadalajara in August of 2004 I met a couple, Ron and Mary Harrington, who were living in Chapala. They happened to be attending church that Sunday at Todos Santos in Guadalajara. They were volunteer missionaries through the LCMS World Missions. They were from Minnesota and members of St. Michael Lutheran church in Bloomington. Before they came to Chapala they had been working to help build the Oswald Hoffman School of Christian Outreach. Their home church really supported an electric joy of Christ and was able to transmit that. The Harringtons are certainly open to the work of the Holy Spirit. Their background is in service, administration, and teaching.

They live about an hour away from Guadalajara and have a home there with a small community room and a spare bedroom with bath.

They have been making contact with the local people by teaching English second language classes for both the everyday person as well business people.

As you can imagine living in a foreign country kind of cuts you off from regular communications. They do not have much of a connection with LCMS World Missions as far as communications from them is concerned. So they are thankful for us keeping in contact through our KIMA newsletter and letting them know what is happening in the Mexican Synod by sharing with them what we are doing for the churches down there.

In March of this year they informed me that they now have a "congregation" of about 18 committed Lutherans there at Lake Chapala who want to be an official church. One of the questions that will need to be decided on is "are they to be part of the SLM or the LCMS or just an independent Lutheran church?" They are basically LCMS or Canadian LCC people. The Harringtons are working to get this group more connected to "All Saints" in Guadalajara and to give Pastor Abiut Fajardo more support. They are also hoping that he will help them.

My latest communiqué with them was at the end of May. They said that their mission is taking a couple of different tracks... one to the retired population there and the other to the Mexican people. Their English-speaking congregation has an increasing number of all-year-round members including some that were previously unchurched. They have advertised through the LCMS World Mission website for an English speaking pastor to help them out. Originally they thought that they could only afford someone for the high season of Dec. through May but now they feel they can support someone on sabbatical or a retired pastor for at least a year.

They mention that the church in Guadalajara is growing and has a lot of children. The SS teachers and the young man that leads the SS group are all fantastic. They said that they have taken some of their English speakers there from Chapala to Todos Santos in Guadalajara but communication there is very limited. Most of the people who attend Todos Santos speak Spanish. Todos Santos is an hour away and the hazardous driving is too much for most older people on a regular basis. Harringtons have helped out at Todos Santos a couple of times by giving a gospel message in English after Pastor Fajardo has given his sermon in Spanish. Pastor Abiut Fajardo is presently taking English lessons 5 days a week so he can increase the effectiveness of his ministry there in Guadalajara and maybe help out part time there in Chapala. Pastor Fajardo has come to Chapala once lately to serve communion to their group and for them to get to know him better. Perhaps he will be able to come regularly some time in the future.

Last November a Lutheran team came to help them convert a front room in their house in Chapala to a classroom. Their English classes are going well and they are hoping to start a children's ministry this summer. In the future they hope to bring some of their students to Todos Santos as their relationship to that church continues to develop.

They are looking for ideas and send the Lord's blessings to us. They truly are a couple of willing, long-term volunteers.

Do you know of any pastors that might be available for 6 months to a year? I'm sure they would appreciate some communication from some of you. Their last e-mail address was harringtonsonline@hotmail.com.

They are **good people** out there on the front lines.

They are praying for KIMA and hope they will be able to work with us more in the future. They send their best to all the members of KIMA. They look forward to staying in touch and appreciate your prayers.



Keep them in your prayers!
Communicate with them!
Go Visit them - remember that extra room?