

January 2024
**Mission
News &**

Helping Hands
Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Board for World Outreach
*Sharing the Gospel in
South America and Asia*



ELS World Mission Fields

2023 year-end recaps

Peru

The Board of Directors of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Peru greets all of you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are grateful for your support which enables us to do evangelism work in Peru.

In the city of Lima, some churches have been improved, and work is being done with the pastors: Jorge Estrada in Ventanilla; Antonio Vilchez in Comas; in San Gabriel, Andrés Robles; in Santa Beatriz, Guillermo Carrera; and in Dulanto, Braulio Capulian. The vicars, Ricardo Orellana, Celso Benitez, and Roy Albarrán, have been supporting the different congregations in Lima and Chimbote.

Vicar Rody Avalos teaches the religion course at the Martín Lutero School in Lima. The school has improved in its educational and administrative structure. We had to restructure the teaching staff, and comply with the requirements stipulated by the DREC. This year the planned objectives were achieved.

continued on next page



▲ School children program



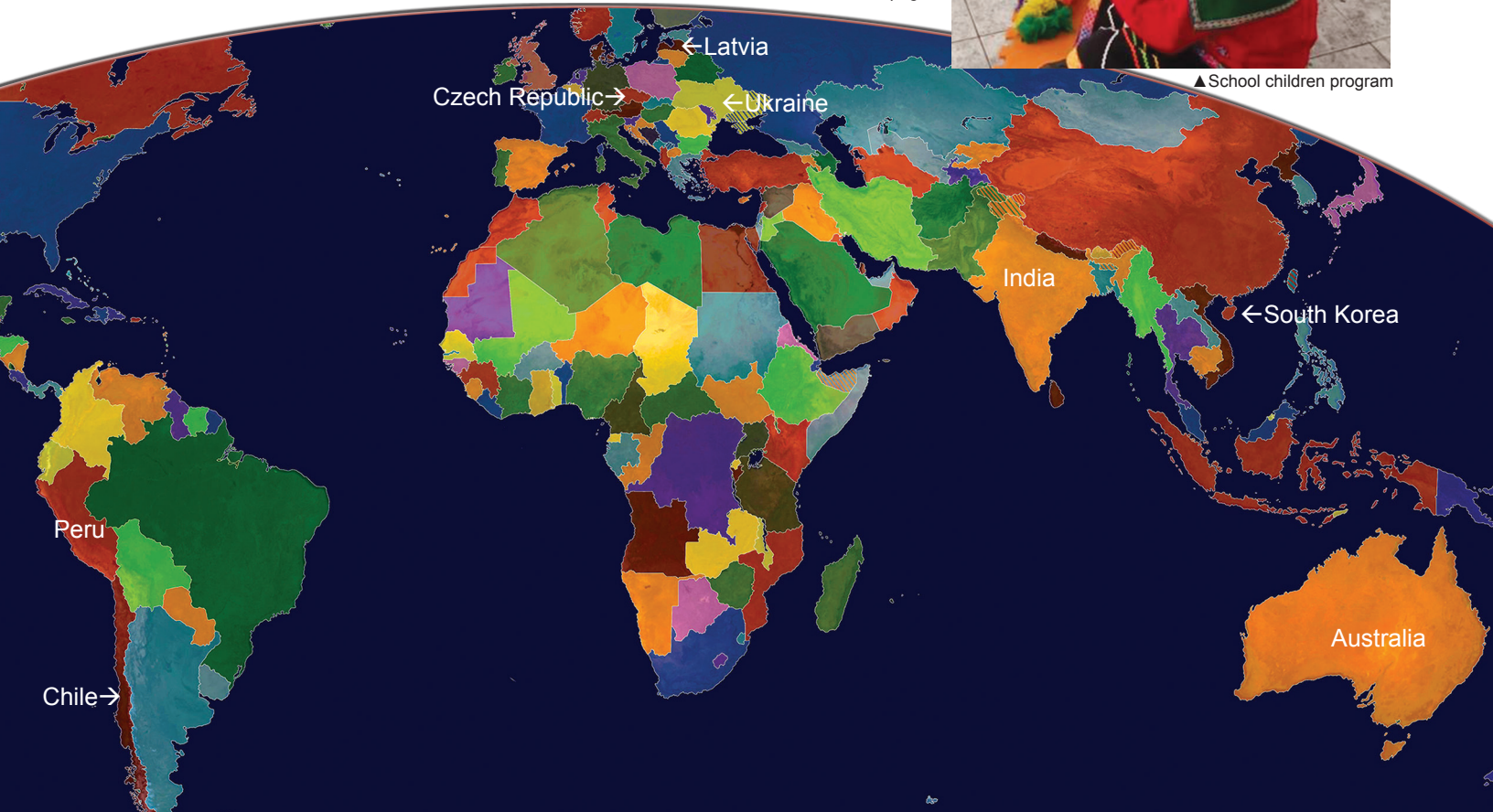
From the Editor

*Rev. Thomas Heyn,
Administrator
Board for World Outreach*

As we begin 2024, we thank the Lord for giving us safe travel to our ELS mission fields. We

happily report that the pastors and congregations in these fields are "back to normal" for the most part. As always, we appreciate your prayers for the work in our world fields and your financial support that makes this work possible. May the Lord grant us a blessed 2023.

"Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever" (1 Chr 16:34).



Peru continued

We have a church in Chimbote, north of Lima. This congregation of 40 to 50 congregants is headed by Pastor Segundo Gutiérrez.

We also have brothers in Cajamarca. Pastor Segundo visits our brothers once a month for three days. May God allow us to soon have a chapel for our services.

Pastors Andres and Segundo with Shawi women.



The evangelism work among the Shawi communities in the Amazon is some of our most important work. Three times a year we visit the communities

to share the Word of God and celebrate the holy sacraments. Louis Terry is under the direction of Pastor Germán Lancha. The Taiwan community is led by Mariano and Pedro. Nueva Chazuta is headed by Pastor Antonio Pizango. Every two months, the Shawi leaders attend seminary classes in the city of Tarapoto.

Chile

Although our Lutheran Confessional churches were planted and grew in La Cisterna, Las Vertientes, San Bernardo, and Linares, sadly, some have collapsed or are declining. The devil does his work in the human heart and it occasionally results in a lack of commitment, by members, leaders and pastors. Even now in Linares, lay ministry was supposed to support the growth of the church, but due to the sinful pride that always surrounds us, that ministry worked only for its own benefit. Another factor was basing the growth of the church on a single family, which acted in the past like owners of the church rather than co-members.

Today in Linares, the outlook is discouraging. Nonetheless, with the shield of faith we will stop the flaming arrows of the evil one according to the will of our heavenly Father. Putting on the helmet of salvation, we will tirelessly wield the sword of the Spirit, which is God's word. Using the same sword in Santiago, we thank God that we have a faithful congregation that is growing. In this next year, we will continue rigorously with our online classes, reaching across the distance, finding more interested souls. Pray that the Word of God shines in Chile.

Mario Gálvez, President

We pray that you continue to support us in this mission work that God has entrusted to us. God bless you. And we repeat our gratitude for your support.

Board of Directors of the Evangelical Synod of Peru

▼ Santiago congregation members



Latvia

In 2023, the Lord was very good to our Confessional Lutheran Church of Latvia. We were blessed, as always, by God's undeserved grace. We have recovered from the pandemics, as the Gospel and Sacraments are delivered without hindrance. We are blessed with four seminary students. Although all of them are bi-vocational and extremely busy, they have successfully studied dogmatics, church history, Luther's texts and confessional writings, as well as apologetics. Our church is looking forward to continue the training of these talented and faithful future pastors.

The Sunday services, Bible studies, and Sunday schools have been a constant blessing to our members. The congregation in Ozolnieki celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its existence, and gave special thanks to God. The Ķekava congregation hosted the summer gathering for the whole church body. The congregation in Jelgava kept working on fixing its church property. The congregation in Riga confirmed some young people and organized youth camp this past summer. Indeed, we have many reasons to look forward with confidence and hope, in spite of rising prices and geopolitical uncertainty. We are grateful to the ELS and BWO for its friendly support in our common journey.

We hope all had a blessed Christmas and will have a happy New Year in 2024.

Pastor Uģis Sildegs

▼ Ozolnieki congregation members



India

As we look back to 2023, we give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, grace, and mercy. We believe that God goes ahead of us into the new year making a way to proclaim His Good News in the land of a billion idols. It has been a remarkable year for the LMSH as we see how greatly the Lord has accomplished his work in the district of Hyderabad, India. Saint Peter's Lutheran Church had been praying and planning to extend its existing sanctuary, add a new seminary classroom, a new dormitory for the seminary students and an extended accommodation for the orphan children. What seemed impossible to us, God made possible. We thank God and all our ELS brothers and sisters as God used you to make this possible.

▼ Painting and lights in new sanctuary



We appreciate the guidance and support of the ELS and the BWO and prepare to dedicate this building to the glory of God in January 2024. A little work remains, so we ask you to kindly pray and support this work as we look forward to its dedication. In addition, on this big day we will ordain our second group of seminary students to be pastors.

May the Lord bless us as we remember the birth and ministry of the King of Glory.

Simeon Mamidi, pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran Church

South Korea-1

When we look back at 2023, there were challenges and difficulties. However, through them all, we saw the abundance of God's grace and love for us and His mission field. I am reminded of Psalm 65:11: "You crown the year with your bounty, and your paths overflow with abundance."

Starting in April 2023, I began outreach groups on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Through these groups, I met many people interested in improving their English, which has been a tool for talking about the Bible and the gospel. Now some are considering becoming Lutheran members.

I am grateful that the 2023 CELC was hosted in South Korea; it was a wonderful time for me to serve and spend time with Lutheran pastors worldwide. In 2024, I anticipate planting a new Lutheran church based on my outreach groups in Korea.

David Choi, pastor and missionary

▼ Korea conversation class



South Korea-2

2023 was a challenging year for Seoul Lutheran Church (SLC). The CELC (Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference) originally scheduled for 2020, had been postponed due to Covid. It finally took place in 2023. Approximately 100 participants from 30 countries gathered. We thank God for the grace that allowed us to successfully manage this event.

In the last week of October, we held a homecoming event for our church members who had become accustomed to online worship service after Covid. Additionally, we extended an invitation to members who live far away. We worshiped together, shared a special meal, and had a great time.

In the third week of December 2023, we elected new church leaders such as elders, anointed deacon, etc. Those elected will be inaugurated in March or April of 2024.

Sam Choi, pastor at Seoul Lutheran Church



▲ SLC members at CELC conference

Czech Republic

In 2023, Martin Luther School in Pilsen completed the reconstruction of its roof and roof windows. The construction work was done during the summer vacations of 2022 and 2023. The cost of the materials and labor were close to \$140,000. This was paid from the parents' fees which were saved for this purpose over the past decade. The new roof should serve at least 25 years. We are thankful for this wonderful blessing.

Martin Vrsecky

exterior of St. Peter's Lutheran Church ▲

Ukraine-Gift of Life

“For behold, [though war’s] darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you” (Isa 60:2).

Medical Clinic on Wheels visited thirteen remote sites this year. Its home base is in Ternopil where Gift of Life continues to treat displaced persons, army families, orphans, the physically and mentally challenged, and needy children. Gift of Life welcomed two new family doctors and a nurse, as well as new dentists to fill the positions of drafted or retired employees.

The Kyiv Left Bank life center just re-opened! Counselors have seen thousands of displaced and local Ukrainians in crisis and shared with them the saving words of Jesus. Rather than providing food boxes, gift cards are bought with donations from the Crisis Fund and redeemed by clients at local stores. Cards are often given after attendance at Bible study or church services.

With God’s help and yours, we convey Jesus’ message of forgiveness at the centers and clinics. We all need God’s blessing, instruction, correction, forgiveness, and direction. This we do through the Gift of Life ministry that you generously support.

Nicholas and Kerry Laper

▼Doctors Zorianna, Natalya, Nurse Oksana and Kerry Laper



Australia

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Brisbane, Queensland, became a partner church of the Board for World Outreach at last summer’s synod convention. We look forward to working with them as they reach out to their friends and neighbors with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



▲Our Redeemer members and friends



What Can You Do to Help?

Pray for each of the mission fields in this newsletter. Pray for the national pastors of these churches as well as for the members of their congregations, that they might remain faithful in their homelands that often do not welcome the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And thank the Lord for their faithful service.

Please—prayerfully consider a gift or regular donation for the work in the various fields. Every field, and some more than others, have many needs where God’s people can provide much needed assistance.

You may designate a gift to a particular field or project on the memo line of a check. You may also go to www.els.org and click on “Donate” in the top banner on the right-hand side or simply scan the QR code below to take you to the donation page.

If you have questions, please contact us in the following ways:

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