

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

# India



## St. Peter's Lutheran Church **Dedication**

*by Simeon Mamidi, Pastor  
St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church*

In 1996, a 200 square yard piece of land was given to Rev. Solomon Mamidi, president of the Lutheran Mission of Salvation - Hyderabad (LMSH), to construct a house for himself. He decided to purchase another 200 square yards with a different purpose—to build a church for people to gather and worship the Lord. Located in the countryside back then, it is now in the heart of Hyderabad. The original sanctuary was 800 square feet accommodating about 90 people.

Now, thanks to God and to everybody who prayed and extended their support, the 800 square foot sanctuary hall turned into a 4,384 square foot hall (including the balcony) which can accommodate nearly 600 people. We also have a roof top multi-purpose open hall of 3,097 square feet. The expansion, which took five years, was dedicated to the glory of the Triune God on January 18, 2024.

The expansion now provides an administrative office to carry out all the administrative work and the seminary training program. Through the prayers and support of the ELS, the LMSH has been able to build many other churches in our district. The LMSH supports homes for orphan children, has a pre seminary program which trains 110 gospel workers, and a seminary program taught by two professors and which has produced five pastors from the first cohort of students and six pastors from the second cohort.

We have partially completed the construction of the orphanage, the parsonage, the dormitory for the seminary students, the seminary class rooms, and the church office, which add another 3,097 square feet. More work remains.

From 800 square feet to 10,578 square feet—we thank the Lord for making this possible by moving the hearts of our brothers and sisters in the ELS. The sanctuary continues with the same name, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, while the building was named AGAPE CENTRE- Love, Learn, Lead. It was named Agape, keeping in mind the care offered to the children, that Christ loved the church and gave his life for it, while it is also a place for the upcoming students to become pastors.



### From the Editor

*Rev. Thomas Heyn  
Board for World Outreach  
Administrator*



January was a special month of celebration for our Christian brothers and sisters in Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India. St. Peter's Lutheran Church was dedicated after a multi-year renovation project. And the seminaries in Hyderabad and Rajahmundry saw the graduation of thirteen pastors. The number of pastors in LMSI doubled! We appreciate your prayers for the work in our world fields and your financial support that makes this work possible.

“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).



▲ exterior of St. Peter's Ev. Lutheran Church



▲ full house at the dedication

We request your prayers for the Lord's continued blessings that many may hear the sweet Gospel in the new sanctuary, for many students to learn and be equipped to lead their congregations and for many orphan children to know that they are not alone, that they are loved and their hope is in the Lord.

Be assured that your financial help has been a blessing to LMSI to prepare these men to become pastors and to be a blessing to many in this land of a million idols, preaching the one true God.

**Editor's Note** ▶ Recently, one congregation gave \$80,000 for construction projects in India as a "challenge gift". We are grateful for the many who have responded. Your gifts are helping to complete this important project and others. There is still opportunity and need for your help. Gifts can be designated as noted elsewhere in this issue. On behalf of your brothers and sisters in India, thank you.

## Ordination of New Pastors

In June, 2016, the LMSH began its second round of seminary training with two teachers, Rev. Solomon Mamidi and Rev. Simeon S. Mamidi. The students met for one week per month with 45 hours of class room training and 60 hours of homework for three weeks while they also served in their congregations. Once a year, we had teachers from the United States teaching various topics. The last two years of classroom training, we had a joint seminary program with the seminary students from Rajahmundry.

After seven years of training, the students graduated to become called pastors. On the last day of class, the students testified how the Lord helped them in their seminary studies—how they could not speak boldly before they began their seminary program and how confident they are now after the program. Following, we offer the first of a series of stories about some of the seminary graduates.

We thank the ELS, the BWO, and all our beloved supporters for remembering us in your prayers.

**I am Pastor Dinakar, carrying out my ministry in the thick forest regions of the Adilabad district. I belong to a tribal community.** I worshipped every idol imaginable and I was very religious. Our belief was only based on what our ancestors taught because in our region, not many people are educated. However, I had some basic education to be able to read and write. At that point, while I was terribly sick, a person prayed for me and he offered me a Bible to read. I fell in love with the Bible and placed a cross among the many idols and worshipped Jesus along with other idols. My community does not allow Christianity, and therefore when relatives came home, I used to hide the cross. However, I wanted to study and know more about Jesus.



▲ Pastor Dinakar

"They tried to beat me up because they have a religion, I am ready to be beaten up because I have a Savior."

I heard from a friend about the seminary program in Hyderabad and traveled there to seek permission to join the seminary program. President Rev. Solomon Mamidi and professor Rev. Simeon Mamidi interviewed me and seeing my interest in knowing Jesus, they took me into the seminary program. When I joined the seminary program, though I was reading the Bible, I did not understand the Bible correctly and when I understood the Bible correctly, I went back home, took away all the idols and only have a cross in my home now. I am not afraid of the message of the Cross. Now, I am also proclaiming the Word among the tribal communities and was recently attacked by the community to stop preaching the gospel and was threatened to be beaten up. Please allow me to make a statement, **"They tried to beat me up because they have a religion, I am ready to be beaten up because I have a Savior."**

The Rajahmundry district has its own seminary program under the direction of Rev. Kalyan Gollapalli. Below is the story of one of the graduates from that district.

**Ramaraju was born into a Hindu family, where he was deeply engaged in the practices and rituals of his faith, seeking the way of wisdom.** In 2004, he had an unexpected meeting with Rev. Ananda where their discussions centered on the gospel and eternal life. Rev. Ananda invited him to attend the monthly workshops to explore Christianity further. Initially reluctant, he found his heart moved by the Holy Spirit's work through the gospel, leading to his conversion after a year.



▲ Pastor Ramaraju

In 2010, embracing his newfound faith, Ramaraju founded a mission church in Jaggampeta and served as a Gospel Worker within LMSI. His commitment to deeper theological understanding led him to seminary in 2017, upon Rev. Ananda's urging. There, he immersed himself in the study of Lutheran theology, enhancing his ability to preach the gospel and administer sacraments, a transformation recognized and appreciated by his congregation. Ramaraju views his seminary education as a divine blessing that has reshaped his spiritual life and approach to ministry. He expresses profound gratitude to God, his seminary instructors, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod for their financial support. This education has not only enriched his faith life but has also profoundly influenced his perspective on public ministry. ■



▲ Hyderabad graduates, pastors, and guests



▲ Rajahmundry graduates and pastors



▲ ordination of graduates

## News From Other Mission Fields

**PERU** The Peruvian pastors continue their work with the Shawi pastors in the jungle churches. Pastor Gutiérrez regularly visits the congregation in Cajamarca. The third story addition to Martín Lutero School is facing some permit issues. We pray the project can be completed soon.

**CHILE** Pastor Mario Gálvez reports that he has several adult confirmation classes in Santiago. The congregation continues to grow there. He continues to reach out in Linares with the help of a vicar.

**KOREA** Pastor David Choi, together with his wife, Ashley, and Friends Network worker Doug, are using English conversation gatherings to reach out to their Korean neighbors. Pastor Choi plans to rent a building for classes and worship and work toward establishing another congregation in Seoul.

**AUSTRALIA** Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Brisbane, Australia, continues to gather while they await a pastor to come to Australia to lead their congregation.

**LATVIA** Seminary teaching continues with the four men enrolled in seminary studies.

**CZECH REPUBLIC** The BWO continues to evaluate the status of St. Paul's congregation in Pilsen which has no full-time pastor serving them. Pastor Martin Vrsecky manages and teaches religion at Martin Luther School.

**UKRAINE** Administrators Nick and Kerry Laper have returned to Ukraine. Work continues with another couple who may replace the Lapers when the Lapers retire next summer. All counseling centers are open and providing services. The mobile clinics also continue their work. Although the war with Russia is a challenge for the work of Gift of Life, the Lord continues to bless this work for his glory and the blessing of many.

## How You Can Help

Pray for each of the mission fields, for the national pastors of these churches as well as for the members of their congregations who live where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not always welcome. May God work all these challenges for the good of his people, as he has promised.

Please—prayerfully consider a gift or regular donation for the work in the various fields. Every field, and some more than others, has 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 [els.org](http://els.org) and click on "Donate" in the top banner on the right-hand side. Or scan the QR code to be taken to the donations page.



For more information, please contact us in the following ways:

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