November 2026
Mission News
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

"I will bring your offspring from the east...Bring my sons from afar...



South Korea

Rev. Jay Webber, ELS World Outreach Administrator

Through the Prophet Isaiah, in Chapter 43, the Lord spoke to his chosen nation Israel of the future restoration of that nation—as the New Israel of the Christian church. Into this New Israel the Lord would draw spiritual children from all nations through the messianic gospel by which he also comforts his people:

> "Fear not, for I am with you; **I will bring your offspring from the east**, and from the west I will gather you. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; **bring my sons from afar** and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made" (5-7, ESV).

Since the parallel term for "from the east" is "from afar," some interpreters of this text do not think that this refers only to middle-eastern nations that were just a little bit east of the Holy Land. Rather, they see this as a prophecy of the gospel, reaching what we today would call the far east: that is, places like China and Korea. As an instrument of God for the fulfillment of this sacred plan, our synod has been privileged to be working in the Republic of Korea for over 20 years, where we have seen God bring many believers into the fellowship of his church by the saving power of the gospel. And in this beautiful land of the far east, some new and exciting developments are currently taking place.

On September 6, **Rev. David Choi**, who has been working in Korea for several years, was installed into a newly-clarified call and ministry as church planter and missionary. In the same service, **Rev. Dr. Isaac Paik** was installed as church planter and theological educator. Pastor Paik was formerly a Presbyterian minister, but became a convinced Confessional Lutheran through his studies of Holy Scripture and the Book of Concord. He colloquized into the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in June.

Pastor David Choi has developed friendships with two pastors—originally from China—who serve independent congregations, and who have expressed a strong interest in becoming Lutheran pastors and in working with us. Dr. Paik will begin a colloquy process with them, through which they will study Lutheran theology under his direction. God willing, in about a year, a seminary program for the training of young men to be pastors will also be inaugurated, under Dr. Paik's direction.

Seoul Lutheran Church, the mother congregation of our work in Korea which is served by **Rev. Dr. Samuel Choi**, has recently moved to a new location (see Page 3). We are hopeful that the pastor and members will be able to make new contacts with potential members in this new location, and that God will continue to bless them. This congregation has an excellent choir, which sings a special anthem every week. Video recordings of Seoul Lutheran Church services can be viewed here: www.youtube.com/@seluch0198/streams Through the closed captions and settings buttons, you can bring up English subtitles.

In all these ways, and in other ways as well, we hope to see a continuation of God's blessings on the work in Korea, as the message of Christ crucified for sinners is continually proclaimed, and as the Lord's children are continually brought into the New Israel of his church "from the east." ■



I. Paik
S. Choi
J. Webber
D. Choi



installation service Sept. 6

News from Great Light Lutheran Church in Seoul

Rev. David Choi, Pastor



David Choi with Friends Network lay missionaries Michael and Sarah Schoenfeld and Lauren Christman

By the Lord's grace, Great Light Lutheran Church hosted the installation service for our new pastor, **Rev. Dr. Issac Paik**, who was installed as a church planter and theological educator for Korea. Issac Paik grew up in a Christian family in South Korea. He became Lutheran through the Lutheran Church–Canada while living in Canada. He decided to pursue his Ph.D. at the Missouri Synod's Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 2025 he became interested in the ELS mission in Korea through Pastor David Choi, who is serving as an East Asia missionary. Soon after finishing his Ph.D. in Missiology in March, Dr. Paik went through our ELS colloquy process in Mankato, Minnesota, and became an ELS pastor. He would be starting his work in Korea under the auspices of the ELS.

Rev. David Choi was also installed as a church planter and East Asia missionary that same day along with Rev. Issac Paik. May God bless his servants as they proclaim His gospel and build His church through Korea and East Asia.

Another exciting update about Great Light is the recent arrival of a new Friends Network family: **Michael and Sarah Schoenfeld**, along with their 17-month-old son Ezra. Friends Network, formerly called Friends of China, is a WELS-affiliated non-profit organization that recruits, trains, and supports lay missionaries to build personal relationships, engage with local cultures, and share the Christian Gospel globally. These young lay missionaries work in partnership with WELS and ELS world missionaries and national CELC churches. Michael and Sarah will help with Great Light's Bible studies, outreach programs, church events, etc., with another Friends Network missionary, **Lauren Christman**, who has been living in Korea for a while now. These dedicated lay workers are a blessing and great help for the continuing work of the Lutheran Church in Korea. Please keep this young family in your prayers so that the Lord will use these servants to share His gospel and build up His church. ■



David Choi at the August free forum

A New Korean Pastor and Teacher

Rev. Dr. Insub (Isaac) Paik



On September 6, 2026, I was installed as a church planter and theological educator in Korea. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve through theological education and the planting of a faithful Confessional Lutheran congregation.

My journey toward becoming a Lutheran began by my studying the Lutheran Confessions at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I became convinced that the Lutheran Confessions provide a clear, faithful, and Christ-centered exposition of Holy Scripture. I also came to see the importance of a ministry firmly grounded in them, especially in a Korean Christian context where biblical and historic Christian teaching is greatly needed.

I have come to believe that Confessional Lutheranism, with its rich historic liturgical worship, has much to offer Korean Christians. It can provide a deeper understanding of the Christian faith and of the enduring treasures of the Christian tradition—all centered on the Gospel. My prayer is that more people in Korea may come to know and confess this faith.

My theological education has prepared me for this work. I completed an S.T.M. program (Master of Sacred Theology) through Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I also completed my Ph.D. in Missiology at Fort Wayne. My doctoral research examined the feasibility of a Confessional Lutheran mission in Korea.

At present, I am in contact with two Korean pastors, originally from China, who are interested in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In the coming months, I plan to introduce them to Lutheran theology and lead classes on the Lutheran Confessions.

I have established an office in Byeollae, Gyeonggi Province, to support theological education and curriculum development. It will provide a dedicated place for study, teaching, writing, and the preparation of educational resources. There are already two catechumens eager to receive catechetical instruction as each of them considers becoming a communicant member. We also plan to hold worship services there, gathering around God's Word and Sacraments.

In addition, I have organized a **free forum** involving the pastors from our ELS mission and like-minded Korean Lutheran pastors from another Lutheran church body in the country which has ties with both the liberal Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. We gather for the study of Confessional Lutheran theology. In July we studied the history of Lutheranism in North America and an overview of the Lutheran Confessions. In August, Rev. Jay Webber, ELS World Outreach Administrator, joined us and lectured on the Lutheran Divine Service. I also translated and delivered to the gathering, Webber's previously-written essay: "The Historic Rites and Ceremonies of Lutheran Worship, with a Special Emphasis on the Liturgical Practice of the Old Norwegian Synod." ■



attendees at the August free forum

Seoul Lutheran Church *Relocation*

A Journey Guided by God's Grace

Rev. Dr. Samuel Choi

We would like to share the news of our recent church relocation and express our heartfelt gratitude for the Evangelical Lutheran Synod's continued prayers and support.

Our journey began when we sought to adjust our lease to downsize from using three floors to one or two in order to reduce rental costs.

Our journey began when we sought to adjust our lease to downsize from using three floors to one or two in order to reduce rental costs. However, as our previous landlord did not agree to this suggestion, we felt led to step out and find a new location for our congregation. This would require breaking the lease, which the landlord would be willing to do only if he had a new tenant ready to move in. With many newly-built properties nearby, we were initially concerned that our landlord would have a difficult time finding a replacement tenant for our space. Yet, the Lord worked through the landlord, who generously offered the unit at rental rates from 20 years ago. Thanks to this, a new tenant was found very quickly, and we entered into an agreement with what seemed like a comfortable three-month transition window.

However, unexpected hurdles soon followed. A deal for a prospective new property for us fell through after we discovered the owner was heavily in debt. This abruptly reduced our remaining preparation period to just about a month and a half. While urgently searching for another location, we also had to coordinate the removal of improvements we had made in the previous property so as to return it to its original condition, and dispose of the accumulated waste, all at the same time. Weekend after weekend, many members of our congregation came together at the church, sweating through long hours to sort through our belongings, clear out waste, and haul away discarded items.

By God's timely grace and provision, we were able to secure our current building. Because of the extremely tight schedule, we had to complete all necessary interior work in just 10 days. The actual move brought logistical challenges as well. Due to a gap in handover dates, our furniture and equipment had to remain stacked in a commercial unit for two days before we could finally move in.

Despite all these intense pressures, the faithful prayers, active dedication, and sacrificial help of the members of our congregation carried us through each obstacle. While minor finishing touches are still underway, we are profoundly thankful to have already celebrated our third worship service in our new sanctuary.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the ELS for your steadfast interest, support, understanding, and prayers throughout this entire transition. Above all, we give all glory, praise, and thanksgiving to God, who faithfully guided every step of our journey. ■



interior space before and after occupancy



How Can You 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.

■ Designate a gift to a particular field or project on the memo line of a check.

■ To make an online donation you may go to els.org/bwodonations

■ Scan the QR code which will take you to the donation page.

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

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