

2024 MISSION SUPPORT

lcms INTERNATIONAL
MISSION



LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN REGION



**CONCORDIA THE REFORMER SEMINARY
CLASS OF 2023**

A Message From

The Regional Director



Dear Friends in Jesus,

The Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever, says the psalmist. 2025 represents 125 years of LCMS Mission working in the Latin America & Caribbean Region. In 1900, the LCMS sent its first missionary, Pastor Broders, to Brazil to begin planting churches. Today, that work has borne much fruit, and we celebrate a partner church of 2000 congregations, missions and preaching stations and approaching 1000 pastors.

Additionally, our sister church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB), is now planting churches in Portuguese-speaking Angola and Mozambique, where 135 Lutheran churches have been planted, and dozens of pastors are being prepared in their new seminary. How the Lord Jesus has prospered the work of our mission! We are privileged to see the fruit of this work several generations later.

Yet the work continues, and there is much yet to be done! As we celebrate 2025 under the banner of *Remember, Repent and Rejoice*, we invite you to continue or join us in this sustained effort of preaching Jesus and Him crucified to this generation who has not yet heard. In a dozen countries, these projects are presented in person in our FOROS (partnership circles). We invite you to come and see the work and return home to tell the story together with us of what our Lord Jesus is accomplishing through the preaching of His Gospel by the power of His Spirit.

Your offerings make a difference. Your prayers sustain our missionaries and projects. Have questions? See our international page at <https://international.lcms.org>, for up-to-date info on FOROs and new articles.

We thank you in Jesus' Name for walking alongside us in *Spreading the Gospel, Planting Lutheran Churches and Showing Mercy*. May the Lord continue to work amongst the nations, and might we be counted as privileged to be a part of this.

In Christ,

Pastor Ted Krey



7 MISSION PRIORITIES

Plant, sustain, and revitalize Lutheran churches

Support and expand theological education

Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministries

Collaborate with the Synod's members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness

Promote and nurture the spiritual, emotional, financial, and physical well-being of pastors and professional church workers

Enhance early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry

Strengthen and support the Lutheran family in living out God's design

**LCMS
LATIN AMERICA &
CARIBBEAN REGION**



**SUPPORT CATALOG
2024**



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BELIZE MISSION



- *Multi-point ministry with its hub in the centrally located capital*
- *Reaching children through engaging, Gospel-based activities*
- *Blessed and challenged by a diverse, multilingual backdrop*

The Lord has blessed the work of missionaries in the Lutheran Church of Belize. Five ministry points are in place, and the growing mission team is looking to establish a Lutheran Church in each of the six districts of Belize. With current work happening in Orange Walk, Cayo, and Stann Creek, they plan to expand the outreach to Belize, Toledo, and Corozal districts.

Seine Bight has a permanent worship facility with expanding outreach. In Belmopan and surrounding areas, children look forward to weekly VBS-style classes. Just outside Belmopan, in Valley of Peace, a new church and preschool provide a place for children and their families to hear the Word of God.

Outreach efforts focus on catechism classes, homework help, English language classes and sports activities.

Located along the Belize River, Camp Concordia has buildings perfect for hosting workshops, short-term teams, retreats, and classes. The hope is that this camp will become a hub of Lutheran learning and education for Belize and Central America. People are coming together from all over Belize to hear His Word. With God's grace, what was once only a vision is putting down solid Lutheran roots.

We pray that the Lord of the Harvest will provide more church-planting missionaries to serve the people of Belize.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/belize-foro

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CASTILLO FUERTE



- *Embraces some of Lima's most vulnerable little ones with Christ's love*
- *Nurtures all aspects of child development*
- *Starting point for outreach to parents and families*

Castillo Fuerte, which means Mighty Fortress in Spanish, is a mercy house located in an industrial area of Lima, Peru, that provides a haven for some of the most vulnerable little ones. Working poor in the neighborhood spend long hours in factories to make ends meet, leaving school-age children to fend for themselves.

In the La Victoria district, Castillo Fuerte provides after-school care for children who have no place to go. Children gather around folding tables each weekday afternoon for a hot family-style meal. Devoted teachers share God's Word through daily devotions. In addition,

they assist with homework and provide emotional support while incorporating extracurriculars like art and music whenever possible. Good behavior is rewarded with much-anticipated outings to a neighborhood park for volleyball or Frisbee.

Twice-weekly chapel services reinforce biblical truths and equip children for active participation in Divine Services. Thanks be to God, many parents are also reached as a result of the outreach of Castillo Fuerte. Some accompany their children to the meals, the chapel services and also Divine Services.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/peru-mercy

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CAYMAN ISLANDS MISSION



- *Supporting Word and Sacrament ministry for Safe Harbour Lutheran Church*
- *Reaching expats who live and work far from their home countries*
- *Bringing the Word to to the working class of Caymanians*

Vacationing Lutherans in the early 2000s saw a spiritual void in the Cayman Islands and desired to plant an LCMS congregation as an outreach to local Caymanians and visitors alike.

The result of their vision was the establishment of Safe Harbour Lutheran Church. Since then, the Word and Sacraments have brought a solid foundation to a core congregation of Caymanians and international expatriate workers. A number of snowbirds join the congregation during the winter months while vacationing tourists find refuge throughout the year.

Since its inception, Safe Harbour Lutheran Church has seen several short-term pastors. However, the

congregation now has a permanent full-time missionary pastor with decades of experience. We pray that this faithful little congregation will thrive with sound biblical teaching, steadfast support, and a firm and gentle hand at the helm.

Plans to establish a much-needed Lutheran preschool on the island have long been in the works. This would extend outreach opportunities to a variety of working-class Caymanians.

Lord willing, through the outreach of this congregation, many local Caymanians and visitors will hear His Word, be grafted into His body, and carry His message far and wide.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/cayman

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CHILE MISSION



- *Ever-widening geographical ministry scope*
- *Sowing Gospel seeds in the wake of repeated disasters*
- *Lutheran schools provide outreach opportunities for 1000+ students and families*

LCMS involvement in Chile began in the 1960s in the port city of Valparaíso. Since the late 1990s, LCMS Disaster Response efforts have helped extend the reach of the Gospel. The Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile has ten congregations in Santiago, Valparaíso, Viña del Mar, Talca and Constitución.

The six pastors who serve the Chilean church are stretched very thin. For example, Pastor Obed Coronado serves with Rev. Marcelo Rivas, a 2022 graduate of Concordia the Reformer Seminary, to provide spiritual care for more than 1000 students who attend Lutheran schools in Viña del Mar and Valparaíso. Each man also serves as the pastor of a local congregation.

Intentional outreach to the local communities has borne much fruit. For example, in Valparaíso, Talca and Santiago, church

members came together during lockdowns to pool their meager resources and serve their communities with physical food as well as spiritual food. That effort continues to produce fruit three years later.

The Chilean church is seeing rapid growth. With that growth comes the challenge of identifying and nurturing future pastors. Pastor Rivas was ordained in March 2023 and another recent seminary graduate is ordained and expects to join the Chilean pastorate within the year. A new residential pastoral formation student will continue his theological education in the Dominican Republic this fall. Many more are needed. We pray the Lord will bless His Church with workers for the ripe harvest fields.

Give Now: <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/chile-foro>

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CONCORDIA THE REFORMER SEMINARY



- *Forming pastors to be evangelists, shepherds and teachers*
- *Rigorous course of study for pastors and deaconesses*
- *Ongoing capital improvements needed to maintain and upgrade facilities*

Since the opening of Concordia the Reformer Seminary in the Dominican Republic in 2017, the institution has focused on preparing men to be evangelists, shepherds and teachers. In just a few short years, thirty well-trained theologians have graduated and are planting Lutheran churches across Latin America. Some 50 men currently attend residential and online pastoral formation classes. Two Haitian men previously enrolled in the residential program are continuing their studies online with the closure of the Dominican/Haitian border. Two more Haitian students are studying Spanish online in preparation for their pastoral formation classes.

The deaconess program has produced 99 graduates, with over 70 more women enrolled. In addition, online pre-seminary courses are up and running. Plans are for a Lutheran teacher training program to be rolled out in the coming year.

The seminary hosts an annual symposium to provide for ongoing theological education, discourse, fellowship and encouragement for Spanish-speaking theologians. In addition, a similar opportunity for students in the online pastoral formation program (FPH) has become an annual event.

Solar panels help provide consistent power and internet so that professors can teach classes online that reach students in the region's remote areas. Additionally, a sizeable theological library was dedicated in 2021 to provide students with access to great theological works.

This project provides ongoing care and improvements for the seminary's physical plant so that it can meet the needs of the constant flow of students and our changing world.

Give now at www.lcms.org/givenow/seminary-support

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CUBA MISSION



- ***Supports ongoing theological education for current and future Cuban church workers***
- ***Demonstrates God's mercy to Lutherans and their communities through humanitarian outreach***
- ***Identifies, educates and encourages future church workers***

The LCMS first established itself on the Isle of Pines, known today as the Isle of Youth, 31 miles south of the Cuban mainland, in 1911.

Current theological projects are aimed at shoring up and encouraging the existing pastorate while also seeking others who desire a theological education. A young man from Cuba graduated from Concordia the Reformer Seminary in 2023 and was ordained and installed at a congregation in Cuba. His wife, a deaconess graduate of our seminary, was installed in the same service. She is trained to do humanitarian outreach, which provides for our Cuban brothers and

sisters in both body and soul and reflects Christ's mercy to the groups of steadfast believers in Cuba and their surrounding communities.

Another Cuban student is enrolled in the seminary for the current academic year. We pray that these present and future church workers will provide a strong foundation for the re-emerging Lutheran Church in Cuba as they seek opportunities to strengthen the church in Cuba and provide for His people.

Support the Cuba Mission - Project ID: CU0001-65002

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DEACONESS FORMATION



- ***Ninety-nine new deaconess graduates of the three-year program***
- ***Students in 9 countries learn to reach out to a hurting world with His mercy arm***
- ***Practical fieldwork complements classroom studies***

Twenty-five ladies from five countries gathered for Latin America & the Caribbean's pilot deaconess intensive in 2016. Afterward, they were excited to promote Concordia the Reformer Seminary's three-year diaconal formation program. As a result, nearly a hundred deaconesses recently graduated, and over 70 more are enrolled in the current cohort. The program has expanded to nine countries.

Deaconesses work in harmony with pastors and other church workers, caring for members and engaging in community outreach. They do acts of mercy while sharing God's Word with the poor in spirit, the hurting and the marginalized. Deaconesses serve in a variety of ways, for example, disability ministry in the Dominican Republic,

soup kitchens in Mexico, community outreach in Panama, and Sunday schools in Guatemala. The program includes women from the countries just mentioned, as well as Uruguay, Peru, Honduras, Spain, and Venezuela.

The deaconess formation program utilizes an online platform for intensive courses co-taught by a seminary professor and a deaconess. Local in-person classes taught by a pastor and a deaconess mentor bolster the online intensive courses, providing additional hands-on projects and discussion opportunities.

Lord willing, the new deaconesses will be a great blessing to the Church as they spread the Gospel to a hurting and broken world.

Support Deaconess Formation - Project ID: LM0006-65011

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC LUTHERAN MISSION



- *Showing mercy inside and outside the household of faith*
- *Planting Lutheran churches in diverse communities in the two largest cities*
- *Lutheran education from preschool to seminary*

The rapidly growing Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission (DRLM) is the hub for mission work in the Latin America & Caribbean region (LAC).

Church plants in the country's two largest cities are moving toward self-sufficiency as they identify leaders, reach out to local and immigrant communities, and sow daughter preaching stations. One church plant is adjacent to the group home for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The congregation wholeheartedly welcomes them into its midst, visibly demonstrating Christ's love for all people.

The five congregations across the country continue to expand intentional outreach programs in their

respective communities. To date, two schools have been established, as well as four preaching stations.

Concordia the Reformer Seminary and Mercy Center (CMSCR) cements the DRLM as the hub with her regional impact. Her international student body serves the DRLM churches, group home and schools. In addition, her graduates carry sound Lutheran doctrine to countries in the LAC region and beyond.

The Mercy Center equips leaders and laity in LCMS missions and partner churches to be the hands, feet, and voice of the Church, providing conferences both online and in-person related to the Church's mercy arm.

Give now at www.lcms.org/givenow/dr-foro

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GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN HOMES



- *Affirming the God-given value of marginalized individuals*
- *Provoking institutional change for people with disabilities*
- *Encouraging holistic, Christlike care for all*

In the fall of 2005, two missionaries arrived in Santiago, Dominican Republic, with one contact name in hand. They aimed to plant Lutheran churches inclusive of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This grassroots endeavor resulted in the incorporation of an NGO, Good Shepherd Lutheran Homes (HLBP), in 2009.

HLBP models excellent care for people with IDD and encourages institutional change in governmental facilities throughout the country. Since 2011, six orphans with IDD have received individualized attention at a group home adjacent to the Lutheran mission church in Palmar Arriba. These young adults are baptized and involved in the worship life of the Church, attending events and activities as they have the opportunity.

HLBP's example has inspired three government facilities to take baby steps toward affirming every human being's God-given value. The changes impact hundreds of abandoned adults with IDD.

And lastly, the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission's congregations have become training grounds for loving the least of these, most notably through Friends of Jesus, an outreach to families touched by IDD. Perhaps the most sweeping change brought about by HLBP has been in the hearts of members: learning to care for others in body and soul.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/palmar-arriba-hlbp

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HONDURAS MISSION



- *Supporting church plants near the capital and southern coast*
- *Intentional outreach to children and their families*
- *Beginning a new Lutheran mission in Choluteca*

The Honduras Mission is served by a Nicaraguan missionary pastor, Junior Martinez. In La Paz, he and his family hosted a small community of believers in his garage. The congregation grew to the point that it needed a larger worship space. As a result, a building program began that included a multi-purpose building, worship facility, and parsonage. The facility was dedicated in February 2022.

Pastor Martinez travels 90 kilometers every other week to bring Word and Sacrament ministry to a church plant in the national capital, Comayagüela. There, Rev. Martinez leads weekly Christian education classes and

does community outreach. Regular Bible classes and worship have also begun in Choluteca, where a missionary pastor from Nicaragua visits twice a month to bring the Word and Sacraments to fledgling congregation. There, the church already owns a worship facility.

We pray the Lord will provide more church workers for the harvest fields to ensure the future of the Lutheran church in Honduras.

Give Now: <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/honduras-foro>

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JAMAICA MISSION



- *Bringing Word and Sacrament ministry to Kingston*
- *Nurturing mission starts in Bois Content and Westmoreland Parish*
- *Using Christian education as a bridge into the community*

Lutheran Hour Ministries radio contacts in the 1990s helped begin LCMS efforts in Jamaica. Alliance Missionary Pastor Obot Ite, from Nigeria, has faithfully served the missions since 2007.

Just miles from resorts and tourist areas, two inner-city church plants thrive in the capital, Kingston. Rev. Ite shepherds the members of St. Andrew Lutheran Church as they gather for weekly services at the Kingston Ministry Centre. The recently rehabilitated facility doubles as office space, volunteer lodging, and the headquarters of Lutheran Ministries in Jamaica (LMJ). He also serves the members of Faith Lutheran Church. Their rented facility is increasingly filled with locals, including a number of young families. It is a beacon of hope in the impoverished and crime-ridden downtown area.

In addition, Pastor Ite serves the members of Faith Lutheran Church. Their rented facility is increasingly filled with locals, including a number of young families. It is a beacon of hope in the impoverished and crime-ridden downtown area.

On Sunday afternoons, Pastor Obot serves two preaching stations in the rural community of Bois Content and in Westmoreland Parish, both west of Kingston.

We pray the Lord will continue to bless the work of Rev. Ite as he faithfully serves the Jamaica Mission. We also pray that the Lord of the Harvest will provide another missionary pastor to plant churches alongside Pastor Ite in Jamaica.

Support this mission - <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/jamaica-church>

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LIFE INITIATIVE



- *Cares for people in body and soul*
- *Teaches about the sanctity of all life from conception to natural death*
- *Translates and produces life-affirming materials in Spanish*

The Abundant Life Project (John 10:10) is an effort by the Latin America and Caribbean Region of LCMS International Mission to respond to life issues around Latin America. This is a region-wide effort to provide Spanish-language materials and resources, encourage life-affirming conversations, and stimulate a response in mercy for a variety of life topics and issues. Lutherans around Latin America have already produced journal articles, workshops, flyers, Bible studies, devotions, and videos in Spanish to address marriage, family, death, human sexuality, abortion and domestic violence, in the few short years since the program's inception. More materials are in the pipeline which will focus on marriage and family, homosexuality, abortion, gender issues, and health. This initiative works hand-in-glove with the Mercy Center, the platform for rolling out region-wide workshops for pastors, teachers and laity.

Support the Life Initiative - Project ID: LM0011-65024

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Contact: vida.abundante@lcmsintl.org.



LUTHER ACADEMY



- *Brings pastors together for mutual encouragement*
- *Conference topics cater to the needs of the local pastors*
- *Strengthens the pastorate with continuing education*

The Luther Academy mission statement is as follows: Luther Academy promotes genuine, confessional Lutheran theology and research through conferences, scholarly exchanges, and publications that assist the Church both to preserve and to proclaim to the world the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the only saving faith.

In Latin America, Luther Academy levels a playing field in which pastoral formation varies. Scholarships enable pastors with limited resources to enrich their theological education. Seasoned pastors or seminary professors lead discussions at these seminars that focus on timely theological topics of interest and importance to the group. Each conference is designed to meet the needs of the pastors as they strive to be

faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. This year, coinciding with the rollout of the new Spanish Lutheran hymnal, Luther Academy is providing numerous conferences around the region to teach about the hymnal and its use in worship and the home.

Rev. Carlos Schumann heads up Luther Academy in Latin America. As an Argentinian, he well knows the challenges faced by church leaders in the region. Pastors often serve three or more congregations while living far from the nearest pastor. These conferences provide not only theological education but also a much-needed opportunity for fellowship.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/luther-academy

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MERCY CENTER



- **Reaches leaders and laity in LCMS missions and partner churches region-wide**
- **Growing repertoire of conference topics**
- **Serves as center for regional disaster response**

Luke 6:36 reads, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." Showing mercy is part of our identity as Christians. Therefore, it makes sense that Lutherans in the Latin America & Caribbean region would intentionally focus on showing mercy in close proximity to the preaching of the Gospel and the planting of Lutheran churches.

The creation of the Mercy Center, an institute of Concordia the Reformer Seminary and Mercy Center in 2017, provided a launchpad for this showing of mercy across the region. Like our seminary, the Mercy Center transcends borders. Since its inception, it has been equipping leaders and laity in LCMS missions and partner churches to be the hands, feet, and voice of the Church for the needy, the marginalized and the oppressed.

Each year, the Mercy Center aims to create a new course that includes a practical workshop. In 2024 the Mercy Center is working with the Life Initiative project to roll out a much-requested marriage and family workshop. In addition, a workshop on Peter Bender's *Lutheran Catechesis* is in the works. The two hymnal workshops, *The Church Sings the Faith I and II* (for congregations and musicians, respectively) continue to be popular. *Evangelism, Christian Reconciliation, Life Issues, and Disaster Response* are the topics of other workshop offerings. AED usage, first aid courses and health clinics are also available upon special request.

Support the Mercy Center - Project ID: LM0011-65024

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Contact: MercyCenterDR@lcmsintl.org



MEXICO MISSION



- *Lays the groundwork for church plants while sustaining and revitalizing existing congregations*
- *Collaborative focus on theological education*
- *Uniquely positioned for engagement with US constituents*

In 1940 the Lutheran Synod of Mexico (SLM) was founded, and entered altar and pulpit fellowship in 2019 with the LCMS; the relationship has only strengthened with the addition of newly-formed pastors.

Mexico City's Martin Luther Institute works with North American missionaries and Concordia the Reformer Seminary in the Dominican Republic to form pastors and deaconesses. The Mexican pastorate, which previously numbered three men, has more than tripled since the opening of the Dominican seminary, with ten ordained pastors. Twelve more men are in the pastoral formation pipeline. In addition, thirty new deaconess

graduates bring the total number of current church workers to 40. Twenty more are studying. As a result, the Lutheran Synod of Mexico is now focused on church revitalization and the planting of new congregations.

Involvement from US partners is crucial, given the number of congregations and connections in the border region. The current rollout of the new Lutheran hymnal in Spanish is an excellent shared resource, helpful for teaching in the home and congregation and for unifying the Lutheran congregations from border missions to towns and cities across Mexico. Thanks be to God for past, present, and future growth!

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PANAMA MISSION



- *Lays the groundwork for church plants while sustaining and revitalizing existing congregations*
- *Committed to forming future church workers*
- *US partners form part of an integral support structure*

LCMS mission work in Panama began with service to military personnel during the Canal Zone era, as early as 1941. The ministry expanded and led to the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Panama (IELPA). Together, the LCMS and the IELPA maintain their commitment to Spreading the Gospel, Planting Lutheran Churches, and Showing Mercy, now in five church plants across the country.

An Alliance Missionary from Brazil, Rev. Raphael Voigt, joined Rev. Dr. Arthur and Deaconess Eva Rickman, LCMS missionaries, in Panama in 2021. Rev. Voigt serves as a church planter and revitalizer in Los Andes. Likewise, Rev. Rickman serves in Balboa, where the refurbished sanctuary now warmly welcomes visitors and members from the bustling community. They join a

small handful of national pastors. The IELPA continues to identify prospective church workers and provide for pastoral formation through Concordia the Reformer Seminary.

Six 2022 deaconess graduates serve their congregations with outreach activities, teaching women and children and caring for their neighbors through acts of mercy. In addition, Lutheran Hour Ministries assists with outreach efforts in Panama.

The harvest truly is plentiful in Panama, with its multitude of classes and nationalities. We thank God for His mercy in raising up faithful Church workers and supporters who provide for their needs.

Give Now <https://www.lcms.org/givenow/panama-foro>

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PERU MISSION



- *Supports outreach through three congregations*
- *Multicultural ministry team works together with local leaders and US partners*
- *Ample opportunity for expansion in a city of more than 10 million*

The Lutheran Mission of Peru, established in 2010, is the umbrella organization for church planting in the country. The mission sports two graduates of Concordia the Reformer Seminary, a seasoned Alliance Missionary Pastor from Paraguay and another from Brazil. Together they serve three growing church plants in Los Olivos, La Victoria, and San Borja, as well as a preaching station. In addition, two more men are in the pastoral formation pipeline.

The faithful Peruvian staff at Castillo Forte work alongside Pastor Ramírez and Deaconess Caitlin to share the Gospel and show mercy to the community. There, children receive a daily meal, homework help, emotional support and God's Word. Each week, Divine

Services draw the Children with their families and others from the community.

The Los Olivos congregation is also seeing rapid growth. It is currently served by Brazilian Alliance Missionary Pastor Rafael Milagres.

In San Borja, Alliance Missionary Pastor Walterson Siewert works tirelessly to share the Gospel with locals. His experience with cross-cultural mission work is evident in the phenomenal growth of the mission, where he began with no members just a year ago. In 12 months, there are 16 new confirmands, with six more in catechism classes. Thanks be to God.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/peru-foro

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PUERTO RICO MISSION



- *Strengthening two existing churches and a new church plant*
- *Using classes and workshops as opportunities for mercy and witness*
- *Sharing Christ's love through two disaster response centers*

LCMS efforts in Puerto Rico began with the work of the Ohio District in the 1990s. Since the hurricanes in 2017, LCMS Disaster Response has continued to provide critical support for the missions and outreach efforts with each successive disaster.

Three church-planting pastors work with an energetic young missionary team to grow current congregations in Mayagüez and Ponce, while beginning a new mission in San Juan. We pray the Lord will provide a missionary pastor to shepherd that new rapidly-growing church plant.

The congregations in Ponce and Mayagüez each operate a mercy house where members and missionaries do extensive community outreach. The mercy houses installed

solar panels in 2022 to meet the need for consistent electricity in the face of regular power outages. The systems were a blessing following the most recent hurricane. The two locations offered a gathering place to charge devices and find respite from the heat. Thus a community of regulars heard the Good News with each visit and built relationships with the church community. In addition, worship services and regular outreach classes such as English and music continued unabated.

As this young team of missionaries works to spread the Gospel while bringing help to a disaster-ravaged community, we pray that the congregations will continue to grow and develop into an independent church body.

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SEMINARY SCHOLARSHIPS



- **Promotes wholehearted dedication to seminary studies and fieldwork**
- **Alleviates the economic pressures of residential student life**
- **Makes seminary education attainable**

Concordia the Reformer Seminary and Mercy Center (CMSCR) in the Dominican Republic, opened its doors in 2017, paving the way for an influx of new Lutheran pastors for Latin America. The institution, noted for its rigorous coursework and practical, church-planting emphasis, draws students from countries across Latin America.

These future pastors have left homes, families and livelihoods behind for the sake of the holy ministry. As a result, the average student arrives at the seminary with few personal belongings and meager financial resources. Moreover, as foreign nationals, options for employment do not exist.

Seminary scholarships provide for their theological education, housing, health care and other essential expenses. The scholarship award varies depending on the situation—married students receive more to allow for accompanying wife and children. The desire is for the men to dedicate themselves fully to their theological education during their time at the seminary. In addition to their theological training, they study English, the language of theology and music, to assist their future congregation during worship.

Seminarians give back to the Church through assigned fieldwork: preaching, teaching, assisting with services, making home visits, and youth activities in Lutheran missions. Seminary Scholarships are an enormous relief for these future pastors.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/latin-america-seminary

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SEMINARY SYMPOSIUM



- *Brings together Spanish-speaking Lutherans from around the world*
- *Spurs theological dialogue and in-depth learning*
- *Provides opportunities for fostering much-needed relationships among pastors*

Concordia the Reformer Seminary and Mercy Center (CMSCR) in the Dominican Republic boasts a rigorous course of study with a practical, church-planting emphasis. Her international influence is perhaps most evident in the only theological symposium tailored to the needs of Spanish-speaking Lutheran theologians worldwide.

Each spring, CMSCR invites sister Lutheran church body leadership, theologians and church workers to join her faculty, students and guests for the three-day event. The event has grown; attendance is now by invitation only to accommodate the burgeoning crowd of international visitors.

The conference features a keynote address and numerous theological presentations related to the

symposium's theme and time for follow-up discussions. Additionally, worship and fellowship are part of the daily schedule. The goal is to encourage theological dialogue and further learning while fostering much-needed relationships among the attendees. Connecting with an international brotherhood of Spanish-speaking Lutherans is a priceless gift, especially for those serving in remote areas.

A similar conference for distance learning students has become an annual event each January.

We pray this annual event will further educate, strengthen and encourage the walking together of our Spanish-speaking Lutheran pastors and church workers throughout the world.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/latin-america-seminary

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URUGUAY MISSION



- *Standing steadfast in South America's most atheistic nation*
- *Coupling Word and Sacrament with community engagement in five locations*
- *Reinforcing Christian education for 1000+ school children*

LCMS efforts in Uruguay, known as South America's most atheistic nation, began among German and Slovenian immigrants in the 1930s. Current efforts are a mix of urban, rural, and school ministries by a team of two church-planting missionary pastors and a teacher working with a local parish pastor and a Brazilian school chaplain.

Since 2015, LCMS missionaries Rev. James and Angela Sharp have used activities like English and sewing classes to entice locals to visit the mission in downtown Montevideo. With each class, visitors are introduced to the Gospel.

Nearby St. Paul Lutheran School is a mission opportunity with its 1000+ enrollment. All grade levels benefit from a Lutheran chaplain and receive catechism instruction.

Worship facilities were dedicated in 2022 in Salto, Uruguay's second-largest city, and in Chapicuy. Each site is home to a growing group of new Lutherans served by Brazilian Alliance Missionary Pastor Maicon Schieferdecker. In addition, outreach is beginning in Paysandú in northern Uruguay.

We pray that the Lord will continue to provide missionaries and to bless the work in this challenging field.

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VDMA - TRANSLATION TEAM



- *Equips the Latin American pastorate with Lutheran resources in their heart language*
- *Uses digital delivery to overcome logistical challenges*
- *Provides for ongoing translation of Lutheran theological works*

VDMA is a Latin acronym that translates, "The Word of the Lord endures forever." During the Reformation, this motto united Lutherans in solidarity against their adversaries. Five hundred years later, the VDMA Project unites a different group of Lutherans: Spanish-speaking pastors and seminary students throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Until 2013, our Latin American pastors had a theological library of about three to five volumes. A more extensive library in Spanish was impossible due to the lack of translated Lutheran theological books.

The VDMA Project is a multifaceted initiative that identifies, translates, edits, and electronically distributes much-needed theological materials to hundreds of

Spanish-speaking Lutheran pastors, seminarians and church workers across 21 countries.

As of December 2023, the project has electronically delivered 50 Lutheran theological books. The translation of other significant Lutheran resources is also ongoing, with materials such as *Good News* magazine, devotions, educational curricula, disaster response materials, and theological articles. In January 2023, a quarterly daily devotion booklet in Spanish for pastors and lay people alike was rolled out in eBook and pdf format.

The VDMA Project is a blessing to the Church as it equips pastors and seminarians with more and more tools to better serve their current and future congregations.

Give online at www.lcms.org/givenow/translation-team

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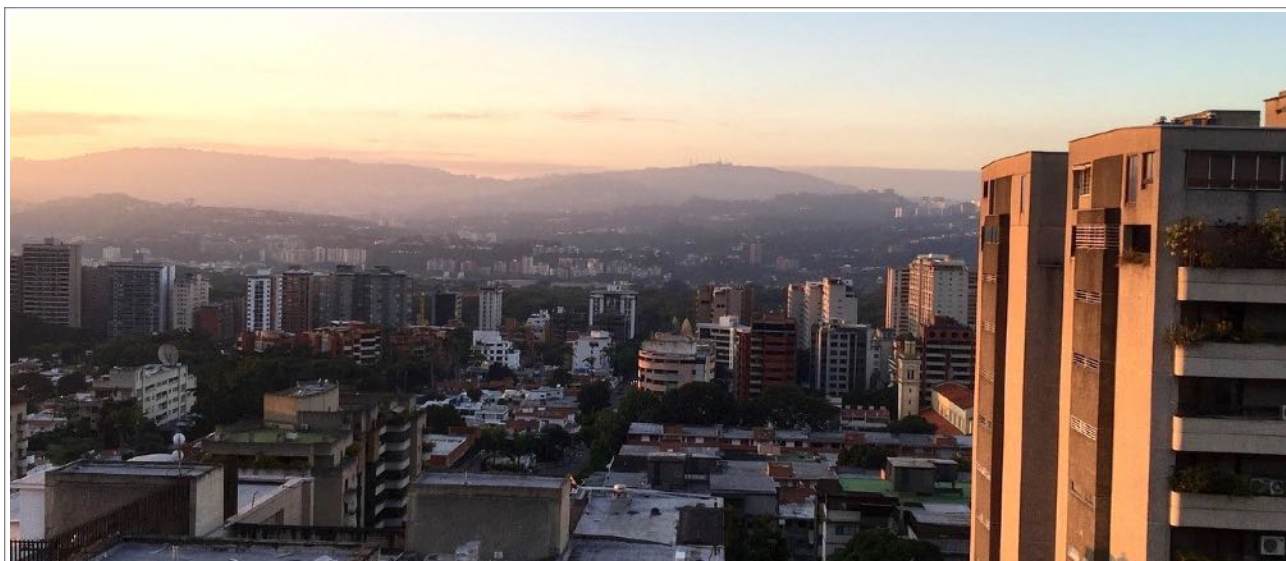
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VENEZUELA MISSION



- ***Supports ongoing theological education in Venezuela***
- ***Protects historic investments in the Venezuelan Church***
- ***Provides for mercy care of Lutherans in Venezuela and elsewhere***

The Venezuelan Lutheran Church faces many challenges due to the ongoing socio-political crisis. Millions have migrated to other countries, including well-educated and professional Lutherans. Nevertheless, the Church remains a bulwark to encourage those who stay and struggle to feed, clothe, educate and care for their families. Through Juan de Frias Bible institute and Concordia the Reformer Seminary in the Dominican Republic, the Church forms new pastors and church workers.

LCMS World Relief and Human Care and LCMS Office of International Missions work with the Lutheran Church of Chile and LCMS missionaries to assist with the following:

- ◆ Securing the most needed medicines and transporting them to the local congregations in Venezuela

- ◆ Providing funds for OIM nurses to secure medicines for Venezuelan church workers and members
- ◆ Providing economic assistance for struggling Venezuelan pastors
- ◆ Funding mercy houses in Chile, Peru and the Dominican Republic to reach out to Venezuelan ex-patriots with Christ's mercy arm

The Venezuela Lutheran Church provides valuable service to the Kingdom of God and contributes to the church planting efforts across Latin America. Currently, two Venezuelan missionary pastors serve in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. A vicar is presently serving in the Dominican Republic. Additionally, countless Venezuelan Lutheran refugees help grow churches in their new host countries.

Support the Venezuela Mission - Project ID: VE0004-66101

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LCMS
LATIN AMERICA &
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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY
SUPPORT CATALOG
2024



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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY PASTOR BENJAMIN FLORES



- *Provides Word and Sacrament ministry to two Spanish-speaking communities*
- *Serves as chaplain for the new Lutheran preschool*
- *Works to find creative ways to reach Belizeans with the Gospel*

Pastor Benjamin Flores is a church-planting pastor serving in Belize with his Norwegian wife, Karina, and their sons Lukas and Matheo.

Benjamin grew up in a Catholic family in Cochabamba, Bolivia. During his high school years, he attended the Lutheran high school in Cochabamba. In college, he studied chemical engineering for three years. Then, encouraged by his Lutheran pastor, Benjamin began theological studies at Concordia Seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2014. He transferred to Concordia the Reformer Seminary in the Dominican Republic and graduated in 2019.

Following his vicarage assignment in Belize, he was called to serve as an Alliance Missionary there through an agreement with the Christian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia (ICEL). He was ordained on November 28, 2020, in Cochabamba.

Rev. Flores is planting churches and leads Bible studies in Valley of Peace and Orange Walk. In addition, he has weekly chapel services for the students at Little Lambs preschool and leads numerous youth activities. Pastor Flores continues to study English online through our Latin America & Caribbean (LAC) regional language institute in the Dominican Republic.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY PASTOR RAFAEL FLORES



- ***Provides Word and Sacrament ministry to the Pueblo Nuevo congregation***
- ***Works to find creative ways to reach Dominicans with the Gospel***
- ***Assists with editing devotions and translating documents for the VDMA Project***

Pastor Rafael Flores is a church-planting pastor from the Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile, serving in the Dominican Republic with his wife, LCMS missionary deaconess, Jamielynn, and their baby girl, Elena.

Rev. Flores grew up in Venezuela and immigrated to Chile before enrolling at Concordia the Reformer Seminary in the Dominican Republic. There he met and married his wife, Jamielynn. The couple currently resides in the Dominican Republic with plans to return to Chile as soon as visa applications are finalized for the young family.

A 2023 graduate of Concordia the Reformer Seminary, Pastor Rafael was ordained and installed as Pastor of the congregation in Pueblo Nuevo, a suburb of Santiago.

There he shepherds the growing congregation with Word and Sacrament ministry. He actively encourages and teaches and mentors the youth and looks for ways to reach out to the local community. He supports the work in the community of Cienfuegos, leading Bible classes and youth activities.

In addition, Rev. Flores assists with the VDMA Project. Since he is fluent in English, he is a wonderful asset to the translation team. He assists with editing daily devotions and translates documents for Spanish-speaking Lutherans worldwide.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY PASTOR OBOT ITE



- *Represents a partnership with the Lutheran Church of Nigeria*
- *Pastoral support and church planting in Kingston and outlying areas*
- *Leadership and vision for men's and children's ministries*

Rev. Obot Ite is a church planter in Jamaica and is the longest-serving Alliance Missionary on the LCMS mission field. He grew up with a missionary pastor, later received his theological education, and became a pastor in the Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN). Since Jamaica has a substantial population with African heritage, partnering with the Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN) to call Rev. Ite to Jamaica in October 2007 as an Alliance Missionary pastor was logical and has borne much fruit.

Pastor Obot serves as the Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, a mission in downtown Kingston and also St. Andrews congregation. He conducts worship services,

leads Bible classes and works especially hard to shore up the men in their roles as husbands and fathers. In addition, he regularly makes visits and conducts services at two preaching stations. His emphasis on empowering lay leaders, expanding outreach to adults and children, and establishing the church's mercy arm has brought in new members and grounded them in God's Word. We pray that the Lord will provide a much-needed missionary pastor to work alongside Rev. Ite.

Pastor Ite and his Jamaican wife, Melissa, are parents to two school-age daughters, Goodness and Aamira, and baby Anaiyah, born in February 2023.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY PASTOR GUSTAVO MAITA



- **Missionary Pastor for Puerto Rico**
- **Disaster Response Coordinator for Puerto Rico**
- **Provides disaster response training for the Caribbean Region**

Venezuelan native, Rev. Gustavo Maita, grew up in a Lutheran home. This firm foundation served as a launch pad for formal theological studies, which began at Juan de Frías Theological Institute in Venezuela and continued at Concordia Seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He served his vicarage in the Dominican Republic and graduated from Concordia Seminary in Argentina.

In 2017, Pastor Maita received a Divine Call from the Lutheran Church of Venezuela to serve as an Alliance Missionary in Puerto Rico. As a church-planting pastor, he has shared preaching and teaching responsibilities at multiple church plants. Additionally, Maita is the Disaster Response Coordinator for Puerto Rico and

provides long-distance disaster response consulting and in-person workshops for church leaders and laity in countries across the Caribbean. With the numerous disasters that continue to hammer Puerto Rico and the region, his disaster response skills have been a great blessing.

Pastor Maita is married to LCMS missionary Ruth Maita, a teacher who also serves in Puerto Rico. The couple has been blessed with two children, Mikhaela and Isaiah. Maita enjoys playing with his children, doing handyman projects, and cooking for family and friends.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY PASTOR SERGIO MAITA



- *Pastoral support for the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission (DRLM)*
- *Spearheads authentic community outreach initiatives*
- *Professor at Concordia the Reformer Seminary*

Venezuelan Pastor Sergio Maita is a church planter and seminary professor in the Dominican Republic. He serves a mission in Santo Domingo that began in 2018 with just himself and his family. His gift of teaching and love for the people has resulted in the rapid growth of the congregation, a blended group of Venezuelan and Dominican members. In addition, he serves a new mission in Los Mina, an adjoining community Santo Domingo.

Maita completed a business degree in 2010, followed by a 3-year residential program at Juan de Frías Theological Institute in Caracas. He graduated and

accepted his first call as a pastor/professor at Juan de Frías in 2008. In 2015, Pastor Sergio received a Divine Call from the Venezuelan Lutheran Church to serve as an Alliance Missionary to the Dominican Republic. In addition to all his duties, he completed a Sacred Theology Masters (STM) degree from Concordia Theological Seminary Ft. Wayne, Indiana, in 2018.

Rev. Maita is married to Yoxandris, a dentist by profession. The couple has three young children. Pastor Sergio enjoys spending time with family, bicycling, and studying theology.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY PASTOR RAFAEL MILAGRES



- *Outreach initiatives for the community in and around Los Olivos, Peru*
- *Word and Sacrament ministry for the local congregation*

Brazilian Alliance Missionary Pastor Rafael Milagres is called to serve as a church-planting pastor in Lima, Peru. Currently, he brings Word and Sacrament ministry to the local congregation in Los Olivos and does outreach activities to bring in new members from the community. Pastor Rafael works alongside a seasoned Paraguayan Alliance Missionary Pastor, Walterson Siewert, and two recent graduates of Concordia the Reformer Seminary.

Rev. Milagres was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, but he had questions that led him to dig deeper into the Scriptures and seek a church body

with more biblical teachings. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) provided answers to all his questions. He studied theology at the university level, and with encouragement from his Lutheran pastor, he began his formal pastoral formation at the Lutheran University of Brazil in 2015. He was ordained in 2021 and called by the IELB to serve as an Alliance Missionary.

Pastor Rafael and his wife Lucia, a fellow convert to Lutheranism, married in 2005. They are parents to teen-age daughter, Mariana.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY PASTOR LUCAS ELBERHARDT



- *Word and Sacrament ministry for young and old in the Dominican Republic*
- *Boundless energy used to connect and share God's Word with youth through sports activities*
- *This young married couple brings incredible musical talent to the mission*

Rev. Lucas Elberhardt, a church-planting pastor in the Dominican Republic, serves a mission congregation in Santo Domingo. Pastor Lucas leads worship services, teaches Bible classes, makes home visits, and works diligently to build bridges into the community. His robust youth outreach efforts include sports camps, youth days and music lessons, all of which include a devotion or Bible lesson. In addition to parish ministry, he currently supervises the fieldwork of two seminarians.

Pastor Lucas completed his theological studies at the Lutheran University of Brazil. In March 2021, he

was called by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB) to serve as an Alliance Missionary to the Dominican Republic.

Both Lucas and his bride, Agatha, are accomplished musicians. Lucas plays the flute, and Agatha the piano. Agatha brings her musical abilities to the community, providing lessons to local youth. In addition, she and Lucas enjoy glorifying God with their musical gifts in the Divine Service and helping raise up future church musicians. The couple's first child, José William was born in March 2023.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY MAICON SCHIEFERDECKER



- *Pastor for Lutheran Church plants in Salto, Chapicuy and Paysandú*
- *Spearheads community outreach initiatives*
- *Shares God's Word with locals as well as tourists who visit the area*

Rev. Maicon Schieferdecker serves as a church planter in three locations, Salto, Chapicuy and Paysandú in northern Uruguay. He leads worship services and Bible classes in a new worship facility in Chapicuy and a rented storefront in Salto. Work on the new mission in Paysandú is in the beginning stages.

Pastor Schieferdecker had planned to become a math teacher, but friends encouraged him in his life-long desire to be a pastor. He graduated from the Lutheran University of Brazil and was ordained in 2006. For the next 15 years, he served congregations in Brazil. In 2021 he was called by the Evangelical Lutheran Church

of Brazil to serve as an Alliance Missionary in Uruguay. Pastor Maicon welcomed the challenge of planting new churches in three locations.

Rev. Schieferdecker and his bride, Jéssica, live far from family and friends and more than 300 miles from the nearest missionary. For some, the isolation would be crippling, but this young missionary family uses the isolation as a time to grow stronger together. They find joy in simple pleasures, chiefly playing with their young daughters, Livia and Talita.

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ALLIANCE MISSIONARY RAPHAEL VOIGT



- **Word and Sacrament ministry for the Lord's Church in Panama**
- **Works with local deaconesses to do community outreach in Los Andes, Panama**
- **Brings youthful energy and a wealth of experience to comfort hurting people**

Rev. Raphael Voigt is a church-planting pastor in Los Andes, Panama. There, he teaches Bible classes, leads worship services and finds creative ways to reach the local community. Pastor Voigt works with two local deaconesses to provide painting classes for children and adults in the community. Each class includes a devotion or Bible lesson. He also provides music lessons, visits elementary schools, orphanages and hospitals, and makes inroads into the community, sharing the Gospel wherever he goes.

Pastor Raphael grew up in Brazil and worked as a computer programmer and systems analyst. He began volunteering with his church's youth and soon held a

regional leadership role. A pastor encouraged him to begin seminary studies, where he was exposed to hospital visits, drug rehab center chaplaincy, and children's music ministry. In 2021, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil called Rev. Voigt to serve as an Alliance Missionary to Panama. His practical experience aids him in his role as a church planter and revitalizer in Los Andes.

Pastor Voigt enjoys soccer, biking, and motocross. He loves studying theology and has plans to earn an advanced theological degree in the future.

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