



SPREAD THE GOSPEL WITH PERSIANS “THE PERSIAN PROJECT”

Rev. Dr. Christian Tiews (LCMS missionary)

If you had told Martin Luther that one day the Gospel would echo through his homeland—not in Latin or even German but in Farsi and Dari—would he have believed you?

Over the last decade, more than five million refugees—many from Iran and Afghanistan—have found shelter in Germany. And by God’s grace, many are also finding something greater: Christ. Even though Iran is officially ninety-nine percent Muslim, it is estimated that up to one-third of the Iranian population is secretly Christian.



In close collaboration with local partners, LCMS missionaries provide Word and Sacrament ministry to Iranian and Afghan refugees in Hamburg, Berlin, Leipzig, Cottbus, and Wolfsburg. They baptize and teach Persians, while also raising up and mentoring Farsi-speaking men who wish to become Lutheran pastors. They translate Lutheran liturgy and hymns into Farsi, sometimes retaining the original melodies, sometimes using Persian tunes to make Lutheran doctrine more accessible to these young Christians. All these are made available on the website nurezendegi.org, a tri-lingual (Farsi, German, English) repository, which greatly facilitates Gospel outreach and provides Lutheran resources to the Persian community and the Church reaching out to them—even beyond Germany—into Iran itself.

Through this quiet, faithful work, about 2000 Persians have been baptized into saving faith in Germany in recent years. Some are now studying to become pastors. We are also planning to use our resources and experiences to expand our work into other countries in Eurasia. We cannot directly preach in Tehran or Kabul. But the converts can—and do. They share Christ with family back home. They lead underground Bible studies. It’s not just mission work—it’s a wildfire of grace, spreading across borders we cannot cross.

We pray that one day the repressive Islamic regimes in Iran and in neighboring Afghanistan will collapse, at which point many Lutheran pastors will be needed to shepherd these young believers and further spread the Gospel. The Persian Project is laying the groundwork for the coming Gospel explosion in Persia by bringing many Iranians and Afghans into the Lord’s flock and forming future ethnic pastors even today.

Budget Goal for the entire Persian Projects in FY2026: \$125,000
Project ID : WE0001-63104



PERSIAN MINISTRY IN BERLIN

Rev. Dr. Gottfried Martens (SELK)

Persian migrants, primarily from Iran and Afghanistan, have found forgiveness and a new spiritual home in Lutheran Christianity amid the heated asylum debates in Europe. At our SELK partner church, Trinity Lutheran in Berlin-Steglitz, Germany, where about 80% of its 1,600 members are Persian migrants worshipping in Farsi, many converts experience Lutheran theology as a comforting contrast to Shiite Islam. This branch of Islam offers no assurance of salvation, while Lutheran faith affirms God's grace and forgiveness, which deeply resonates with these migrants.



Trinity's outreach began in the 2010s and expanded as conflicts in the Middle East increased the number of asylum seekers entering Europe. Many of these migrants face harsh realities, including deportations from countries like Sweden back to dangerous homelands. Fleeing persecution, especially as Christian converts who face death or imprisonment in Islamic countries, they seek refuge in Germany. Tragically, EU rules often force them into hiding to delay deportation.

Trinity Lutheran Church offers "church asylum," allowing around 30 asylum seekers to live in the church's basement temporarily, protected from deportation by respect for the church's sanctity. This community lives and worships together, learning German and Lutheran doctrine while awaiting legal asylum decisions. Despite increasing governmental pressure and skepticism toward Christian conversion claims, Trinity persistently serves spiritual and physical needs, administering Word and Sacraments as their core mission.

Many converts share spiritual dreams about Jesus that lead them to faith and baptism, a culturally significant phenomenon in Persian heritage. The church's mission here relies solely on preaching the Gospel and sacraments, with no elaborate strategy, which has caused the ministry to grow rapidly as converts invite friends. Worship services are held multiple times a week in Farsi and German, with members traveling long distances and often sleeping in the church to attend.

Despite challenges linked to immigration politics, the mission embraces the hope that displaced Persian migrants will find an eternal home in Christ within His church, transforming their lives through faith and community. Amid hardship, the radical hospitality of the church, and the power of Gospel-centered mission among vulnerable migrants from Persian backgrounds in Europe and beyond is a shining light in a dark world.

More info in this [story by Roy S. Askins | Photography by Erik M. Lunsford | Winter 2025](#)



PERSIAN PROJECT - LEIPZIG

Deaconess Kim Bueltmann (LCMS missionary)

Deaconess Kim Bueltmann is an essential part of the mission work of The Bridge (Die Brücke), a Lutheran outreach center in Leipzig, Germany, that connects refugees and native Germans to Christ. The center, run by Hugo Gevers (Lutherische Kirchenmission, SELK) and LCMS missionaries, provides Bible classes, crafts, and community activities that help refugees learn German while sharing the Gospel of Jesus. Although many refugees initially identify as atheists, they regularly return to hear the Word of God and engage in fellowship.



Refugees from Iran share harrowing stories of persecution under the Muslim regime, including underground house churches raided by authorities, imprisonment, torture, and threats of death. Despite these hardships, they express profound faith in Jesus, highlighting His message of forgiveness and love as transformative. Their journey to Germany includes dangerous travel through multiple countries and even a shipwreck in the Mediterranean. In Germany, the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche (SELK), a partner church of the LCMS, actively ministers to refugees in Saxon cities through teaching, pastoral care, and integration assistance.

Missionaries like Deaconess Kim Bueltmann and Rev. Hugo Gevers emphasize the importance of providing not only spiritual guidance but also hope through Christ. Baptism classes are particularly popular among refugees, meeting government approval and offering a tangible connection to the faith. Efforts include fostering community between German believers and refugees, offering services in both Farsi and German, and translating Lutheran materials like Luther's Small Catechism into Farsi. The work at Die Brücke stands out as one of the few intentional Lutheran mission efforts among migrants in a largely atheist region. Despite challenges, the ministry bears fruit as refugees and Germans alike experience the joy of hearing the Gospel in their own languages. The outreach center and local congregations warmly welcome all, creating a spiritual home where God's Word leads to faith, healing, and community.

More info in the story by Kevin Armbrust with [photography by Erik Lunsford](#)



GERMANY SUPPORT LINK

“It is moving for me that the very calamities we pray God to spare us from—war, persecution, and oppression—he uses for our good, as Joseph reminded his brothers long ago (Genesis 50:20).

Eighty years ago, war drew American troops into Germany, paving the way for occupation and, by God’s grace, the planting of three military expat congregations. The missionary efforts begun decades ago have now sparked gospel outreach to similar communities beyond Germany. Another war uprooted millions of Ukrainians, relocating many to Wittenberg, where dozens have been planted in and around God’s saving word and sacraments, and opening doors to show mercy to Ukrainian orphans in Switzerland. At the same time, oppressive regimes in Iran and Afghanistan have driven tens of thousands of Persian refugees into exile, creating untold opportunities to evangelize, baptize, shepherd, and care for them by the thousands. Without a doubt, God is great in Germany!

What comfort to know that God’s kingdom stands and expands by his own gracious plan! The Lord, who sends his workers across the globe to harvest his saints, has called many of them to faith and continues to sustain them in the gospel proclaimed by LCMS missionaries in Germany.”

Regional Director Rev. Dr. David Preus



<https://www.lcms.org/givenow/germany-foro>