



Faces of FAITH

STORIES FROM WELS MISSIONS



2022/2023

WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD





DEAR FELLOW WITNESSES,

Start 100 new home mission churches in 10 years. That's 10 missions each year, 10 new dots on the map throughout North America. During the same time, we want to support 75 enhancement grants to help existing congregations reach more souls, often in other cultures. It's an aggressive plan. To some, it might seem unachievable. Can our synod do this? Do we have the manpower, money, and ministry resources?

We trust that God will bless our efforts. This initiative isn't as much about planting more churches but about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. **IT'S ABOUT AGGRESSIVELY REACHING LOST SOULS.** It's about Christ's mission to his church. You know that mission: "Go and make disciples of all nations." But consider the words that Jesus spoke right before that: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Look at the one who commissioned us. He is the one who said to the wind and waves, "Quiet, be

still;" and to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take up your mat and walk;" and to Lazarus, "Come out." He is the one who died, rose from the dead, and descended into hell proving and proclaiming his victory. Death was put to death. The devil defeated. The powers of sin destroyed.

This is the Jesus who has commissioned us. This is the Jesus who rules over his church on earth. This is the Jesus who has equipped us! This initiative is about aggressively and confidently doing the work that he has called all of us to do.

There are still many out there waiting to be found and reached. They just don't know it yet. So let's support this. Let's do our part to get after it, trusting that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.

Pastor Mark Gabb

PASTOR MARK GABB
Board for Home Missions chairman



141
HOME MISSION
CONGREGATIONS





HOME Missions

WELS Home Missions is blessed to plant churches and assist mission-minded congregations in the United States, Canada, and English-speaking West Indies. Home Missions currently supports 141 congregations with financial subsidy or district mission board/mission counselor assistance, with 29 of those being cross-cultural mission congregations. Home Missions also provides over 30 campus ministries with financial support, while assisting hundreds of other congregations that serve college students around the United States and Canada.

Since the last printing of *Faces of Faith*, the WELS Board for Home Missions approved 15 new home mission requests. Some are brand new home mission locations, others are enhancements at existing congregations, and some are unsubsidized missions. Learn more about these new home mission churches at wels.net/newstarts.

NEW HOME MISSION STARTS

New starts can be a second site or a daughter congregation of a current congregation.

- Windsor, Colo.
- Canton, Ga.
- Collinsville, Ill.
- Wichita, Kan.
- Conroe, Tex.
- Lodi, Wis. (Unsubsidized)

ENHANCEMENTS

Churches can request additional funding to enhance ministry at their current congregation. This could be calling an additional pastor or staff minister, starting a cross-cultural ministry, or restarting a church where members have renewed their efforts to go with the gospel into their community.

- **Divine Savior** – Delray Beach, Fla.
- **Our Savior** – Burlington, Iowa
- **Cross of Glory** – Baton Rouge, La.
- **St. John's** – St. Paul, Minn.
- **Ascension** – Crossville, Tenn.
- **Abiding Savior** – Killeen, Tex.

UNSUBSIDIZED MISSIONS

Home Missions aids unsubsidized mission congregations through its district mission boards, mission counselors, synodical support staff, and special project funds, but does not provide direct financial support.

- **Mt. Calvary** – Redding/Anderson, Calif.
- **Living Faith** – Midlothian, Tex.
- **Good Shepherd** – Beloit, Wis.



119

NEW MISSION STARTS/
ENHANCEMENTS
SINCE 2011

100 MISSIONS IN 10 YEARS

WELS HOME MISSIONS 2023-2033

LIFE OF A HOME MISSION CHURCH

No community is the same. No core group is the same. No soul is the same. But we know that all people have the same need for a Savior from sin. Those differences mean that no home mission church starts the same way or follows the same path to maturity. However, we pray that all WELS home mission churches contribute in their own unique way to the ultimate outcome: pointing souls to Jesus through the proclamation of the gospel.

START

1



1

Pre-approval

\$0

A core group begins Bible study and initial outreach with support from their district mission board and mission counselor.

3

Years 2-3: Worship begins

\$\$

Equipment is purchased for worship in a rented space. The mission ramps up outreach and looks to increase name awareness in the community.

2



2

Year 1: Home mission approved

\$

A home missionary is called/assigned and works with the core group to plan further community outreach. The group chooses a name for their church.

3



4



4

Years 4-5: Looking forward

\$\$\$

Expanding church membership begins exploration to buy land or purchase an existing facility for a permanent church home.

5



1 Pre-approval

3 Years 2-3: Worship begins

4 Years 4-5: Looking forward

START

Years 1-2: Church planter coaching program

Years 4-6: WELS Church Extension Fund support

2 Year 1: Home mission approved

Years 6-7: Putting down roots 5

Faces of Faith—Lauren

Meet Lauren, an adult confirmand and member at Intown Lutheran Church in Atlanta, Ga. Hear how her life was changed by the gospel she heard through a WELS home mission congregation in this special video.

Imagine how many more lost souls can be brought home to Jesus through the planting of new churches. That's why WELS Home Missions is launching an ambitious new initiative to plant 100 missions in 10 years from 2023–2033.

Learn more about this initiative and how you can get involved at WELS.NET/100IN10.



**WATCH
LAUREN'S
FAITH STORY:**



5

Years 6-7: Putting down roots

\$\$\$\$

A permanent facility is purchased and remodeled or built from scratch. Personal evangelism efforts continue, and the home mission is a solid community presence.

7

Years 10+: WELS churches reach more souls

\$0

Healthy WELS churches with an outreach mindset grow Christ's kingdom and reach more souls locally and through expanded synod mission efforts at home and abroad.

7



6

Years 8-10: Church maturity

\$\$\$ → \$\$ → \$ → \$0

A growing membership and spiritual maturity and stewardship lead to higher local support for the church, freeing up Home Missions resources to plant other missions.



8

GOAL!

Thriving WELS churches support new growth

Recent home mission churches support the planting of additional home missions through daughtering new churches, starting a second site, enhancing their ministry to reach a new demographic in their community, and/or supporting WELS home and world mission efforts through Congregation Mission Offerings and special gifts.

6 Years 8-10: Church maturity

Pre-approval–Year 10: District mission board and mission counselor support

8

GOAL

7 Years 10+: WELS churches reach more souls

FACES OF FAITH STORIES

Faces of Faith – Jesse

Jesse Jensen had recently moved to Firestone with his folks. He had just graduated from nursing school and was working full time, but he knew something was missing. He grew up “Christian” in the sense that he knew of Christ and knew of church, but he had never actively practiced or been a member anywhere. What he did have was a grandfather who was a believer and had an interest in knowing more, so he picked up a phone and called me. I told Jesse, **“We aren’t actually worshipping in person, and we don’t actually have a building. . . but I’ll buy you a coffee.”** He said yes, and his journey to Christ and Carbon Valley began. Over the next year and a half, we systematically walked through the Bible. Jesse couldn’t get enough. It was incredible to talk through the Ten Commandments with someone who had never read them before.



Jesse stuck with us. He learned what worship looks like, built relationships, and watched how our members treated one another and modeled Christian living. But most of all, he heard about his Savior over and over again, and that Savior worked in his

heart. So much so that when Jesse’s grandfather died, his family asked Jesse to say something and lead the memorial. I gave him some prayers and thoughts, and he took them and led his family to give thanks for his grandfather’s life, but also to see Jesus. And after all that, Jesse was the first adult baptism and new member in our new building.

FROM TIM SPIEGELBERG, home missionary at Carbon Valley in Firestone, Colo.

Faces of Faith – Ivan and Gina

It had been a year since Ivan and Gina first received an invitation to Cross of Christ. When they first came to a service, a year later, they came by themselves. Gina said, “To be honest, we were terrified to go to a church. Really just scared of being judged or not fitting in. But

we finally decided we needed to have God in our lives and didn’t know where to turn. We remembered you guys and saw that you meet at a restaurant. We came and everyone was so welcoming. The whole service—it was just what we needed. It felt like home.”

When Ivan and Gina started going through our basic Christian instruction class and we started talking about grace, they said, “We’ve never heard it quite like that before. God will just forgive us because of Jesus? We don’t have to try to be good enough first?” **Grace is always a beautiful surprise.**

Since then, Ivan and Gina have been bringing their four children with them to church. They finished instruction and joined as members at Cross of Christ. They have found a place they can call home and a community that’s like family. Gina said, “This church is everything I asked for and more.”

FROM KURT WETZEL, home missionary at Cross of Christ in North Nampa, Ida.



DID YOU KNOW?

Fourteen district mission boards work to start new churches and support existing missions in their districts.



Amazing Grace
in Amarillo,
Tex., launches
public worship in
September 2022.



Faces of Faith - Merle

I was walking our dog through the neighborhood, and out walked this nice man with a cross in his hand and a smile on his face. It was the first time I met Merle. I knew I didn't want it to be my last as I returned home with my new gift: a handmade wooden cross. After 92 years, Merle still didn't have anyone to share in learning about what our Savior does for us. Because of our new home mission, we can keep sharing our

God-given faith of our eternal life to come. It's the same reason Merle continues building wooden crosses in his garage. Together, we let our lights shine. **You never know how God is going to use us to connect others to his life-saving word, just as he did for Merle.**

FROM HANS THOMFORD,
home missionary at Amazing Grace
in Amarillo, Tex.

GIVE A GIFT

to support
WELS Home
Missions by
scanning the QR
code with your
phone or visiting
wels.net/hmgift.



Faces of Faith—Alicia

Alicia first came to church with her family for a special worship service in 2019. Although her family came to church as a courtesy to someone who invited them, they agreed to a follow-up visit with me. At first, they were skeptical of this pastor they didn't know. However, they kindly shared they were new to the country—having emigrated from Honduras—and didn't have a church home. Alicia convinced her family to give our church a shot. Over time, they attended worship, baptized their son, and took Bible information classes. By summer 2020, Alicia and her parents were confirmed.

When her parents can't come to church due to work, Alicia drives on her own. She often brings her younger brother and has brought various friends. She participates in our online adult Bible studies, helped start our small choir, and then she asked if she could start a youth group. We gathered a few other teens from church and launched "Palabra Youth." **Alicia is an amazing example to follow. In all things she looks to glorify God and to contribute to her church's mission!**

FROM RYAN KOLANDER, home missionary at Palabra De Vida in Detroit, Mich.



DID YOU KNOW?

Six mission counselors help district mission boards develop new churches/ministries and counsel home missionaries and their churches as they grow.

Faces of Faith—Travis

My life changed in a tiny room in the back of a music store. I was at one of the lowest moments of my life, playing my hurt into one of the store's guitars. Ten minutes earlier I had called out angrily to God, saying that I was tired of living with my trauma and that if he was going to do something, he should do it now. God responded by sending Pastor Paul Bourman. He walked up and asked if he could help me in any way. I responded under my breath, "You sent me a pastor? You've gotta be kidding me."



The tears flowed down my cheeks. Embarrassed, I tried to hide my tears, but God had plans to wipe them away.

I didn't think that it was possible to truly heal from my trauma. I had anger in my heart that was eating away at me. I was convinced that I had no chance at having any real relationship with anyone ever again. When I learned about Jesus, I learned what forgiveness truly is. And now, that forgiveness overflows in my life. I can even forgive those who hurt me. By grace alone, in all my hurt, Christ has become my salvation. I became a member at Hope Lutheran Church in Tigard, Ore., this past fall. I proposed to my now fiancé, Frankie, after a worship service this winter, and my son is coming to believe that Jesus died for his sins. It is by grace I have been saved!



29

CROSS-CULTURAL
MISSIONS

Faces of Faith – Grandma Marian

Grandma Marian brings a generation of Navajo knowledge and history to the members of Christ the Rock. The Lord blessed her with the gift of faith from a very early age. She remembers walking

a few miles to church every Sunday with her mother and treasures those memories. She

attended a Christian boarding school as a child and can still picture the day the U.S. Marine Corps walked into her brother Edmund's classroom and chose

him to train as a Navajo Code

Talker. Grandma Marian's faith carried her throughout her life as an interpreter for the

hospital in Rehoboth, N.M., as the wife of a Navajo police officer in Ft. Defiance, and as the mother of her four children.

Her greatest joy is knowing Jesus as her Savior and being able to share that joy with her family and others. She wants the entire Navajo Nation to know that Jesus died and rose again for them!

Even with the challenges of using a walker and losing her eyesight, she doesn't miss a worship service. If she can't make it to Bible study, she joins online with her daughter Myra and the rest of her family. Whether she's here in person or online, her laughter fills the room with sunshine.

FROM JON BROHN, home missionary at Christ the Rock in Farmington, N.M.

Faces of Faith – Fan

I was born and raised in western China until I was 18. I grew up happily without being bothered to think about where we all come from and if there is ultimate truth. Shortly after I came to college, I met my now husband, Dan, and was introduced to Christianity. It all sounded very interesting, so I thought I would explore it more at the local Presbyterian church. Even though I was impressed by the worship itself, I was confused at the terms and not able to understand the messages in the sermon. I quickly lost interest and moved on to other parts of school life. Over the years, I had more and more questions: why do Americans cherish tradition in a certain way? What is my way of living and how do I find guidance? Fast forward 10 years, and Dan and I learned about Intown Lutheran Church in Atlanta, Ga., from our good friend Stephen. We stumbled across a Bible basics class led by Pastor Lucas Bitter, and I unleashed the questions I had boxed up in my head.

I sought answers, and I found grace. The true gospel I found at Intown prepared me for Baptism. I was never this connected with spirituality before. After this many years, it is never too late to begin!



CAMPUS Ministry

WELS Campus Ministry, a ministry of WELS Home Missions, provides resources, support, and encouragement to WELS congregations that serve college students. These congregations are vital in connecting college students with fellow Christians, strengthening their faith with the gospel, and encouraging them to share that faith with other college students.

Faces of Faith - Colleen

One Sunday in August, Colleen and Megan walked into our church for the first time. We learned that they were freshmen, roommates, and members of the softball team at Agnes Scott College here in Atlanta. We also learned that while Megan is a WELS member from Houston, Tex., Colleen had never attended a worship service in her life. They continued to attend worship regularly and quickly became staple attendees of our Tuesday night Campus Ministry Bible study, bringing lots of laughter and joy, and often several other softball team members with them.

In January they asked, "Would it be possible for Colleen to have Communion?" When I welcomed Colleen to join the Bible basics class we had just started, they high-fived in excitement. Colleen diligently attended our weeknight class, working around her busy school and sports schedule and squeezing in makeup lessons over Zoom during her free hours.

On Easter Sunday 2022, Colleen was adopted into God's family through Baptism. Two weeks later she was confirmed into the Lutheran faith and received Communion for the very first time. Standing beside her, with a huge smile on her face, was her roommate Megan. **Colleen and Megan illustrate the "double blessing" of our Campus Ministry program. It gives WELS members a chance to grow in their faith and share that faith with others!**

FROM LUCAS BITTER, home missionary at Intown in Atlanta, Ga.



Faces of Faith – Mackenzie

At such a large university like the University of Michigan, it can be hard to meet other students who want to grow their faith and participate in Bible studies and weekly church services. Consistent weekly gatherings offered through Campus Ministry have really strengthened my faith and my relationship with God as I experience this new stage of life. It has provided me with a support system when faced with lifestyles and ideas that are different from my own and what I grew up with. The Bible study topics are engaging and especially relevant to me and help prepare me to answer difficult questions and ideas that I have been faced with. Campus Ministry has helped me stay connected to church and other Christians while at college.



30+

CAMPUS MINISTRIES
FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED
BY HOME MISSIONS



Hey students! If you are entering college or are in college already, visit wels.net/college to sign up with WELS Campus Ministry so we can share your information with your local campus pastor and send/e-mail you free copies of *Meditations* devotions and *Forward in Christ* magazine.

Connect WITH WELS MISSIONS



SPEAKERS

Request a mission speaker for your next church mission festival, school assembly, group meeting, or LWMS rally at wels.net/speaker-request.



FACEBOOK

Like the WELS Missions Facebook page at fb.com/WELSMissions for additional photos and updates from our mission fields.



SUBSCRIBE

Read weekly stories from home and world missionaries and receive quarterly Missions news updates in your inbox at wels.net/subscribe.



JOINT Missions

WELS Joint Missions supports mission opportunities that are the responsibility of Home Missions, World Missions, and Ministerial Education. Much of this work centers around diaspora (people-group) ministries, where immigrants who have joined our fellowship in the United States and Canada are able to take the gospel back to friends and family in their country of origin. Joint Missions administers the work of the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) and assists in other cross-cultural outreach efforts and new programs like WELS Mission Journeys. Current ministries being supported by WELS Joint Missions includes outreach to **Bangladeshi, Chinese, Hispanic, Hmong, Korean, Liberian, South Asian, Sudanese, and Vietnamese** people-groups.

Faces of Faith - Contreras Family

Salvador Contreras has always been a student of God's Word with lots of questions. In his research online, he came across the app *Academia Cristo*, which is an online Bible training tool used by the WELS Latin America mission team. Through personal study and the Bible classes offered via *Academia Cristo*, Salvador and Natividad knew they wanted to find a Lutheran church to continue growing in their faith and bring their children up in the Word. And so they walked into our building (a home mission congregation) one Sunday last summer. Their children were baptized in July 2021, and Salvador and Natividad were confirmed in March 2022. Now our discussions revolve around promoting *Academia Cristo* to Spanish speakers in the Denver area so Salvador can share the same peace he has found. **As the seeds are planted and watered, we have a church community ready to serve them!**

FROM PAUL BIEDENBENDER,
missionary at Christ in Denver, Colo.



FAST FACTS

- In spring 2022, the Joint Mission Council approved financial support for a **new Sudanese ministry in Phoenix, Ariz.**, and a **second Korean pastor at a Korean church (pictured right) in Las Vegas, Nev.**
- The **Global South Sudanese Committee**, comprising Sudanese pastors and leaders with their Anglo partners, oversees Sudanese ministries at 10 congregations in North America and in refugee camps in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.
- **Two Vietnamese men from Boise, Ida.**, are planning to graduate from the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) in spring 2023, which will prayerfully open opportunities for additional Vietnamese ministries in places like Garden Grove, Calif.
- **Two international friendship centers** have been established in Detroit, Mich., and across the Canadian border in Windsor, Ontario, to reach South Asians in the area with the gospel.

LEARN MORE
about WELS
Joint Missions at
**wels.net/
jointmissions.**



2

NEW JOINT MISSIONS
MINISTRIES
IN 2022



A choir from **Peace in Jesus Vietnamese Lutheran Church in Boise, Ida.**, sings for Easter worship in April 2022.



WELS Church Extension Fund

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Thank you, WELS Church Extension Fund!

Since 1993, WELS Church Extension Fund (CEF) has approved hundreds of loans and nearly \$41.2 million in matching land and facility grants to home mission congregations. WELS Home Missions also benefits from WELS CEF's endowment and unrestricted net asset (UNA) grant programs, receiving nearly \$10.5 million in endowment distributions and UNA grants over the past 10 years, to help fund new home mission starts and enhancements. All of this starts with you: the WELS congregations and members who invest in WELS CEF. WELS Home Missions is thankful for WELS CEF's support and your partnership in reaching out with the gospel!

To learn how you can invest with WELS CEF and simultaneously support WELS Home Missions, visit wels.net/cef.

The purchase of WELS CEF securities is subject to risks, which are described in our Offering Circular. This is not an offer to sell, nor the solicitation to buy, our securities. We will offer and sell our securities only in states where authorized. The offering is made solely by the Offering Circular.



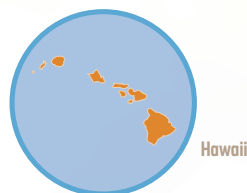
WELS MISSIONS
serves more than **300,000 PEOPLE**
worldwide WITH THE gospel.

wels.net/missions





WELS SUPPORTS
more than **140**
MISSION CONGREGATIONS
as they
share THE
gospel
in the
United States, Canada,
and the West Indies.



HOMELIV



DISTRICT MISSION BOARDS

ARIZONA-CALIFORNIA

Gilbert, AZ
Goodyear, AZ
Phoenix, AZ
Vail, AZ
Folsom, CA
Fresno, CA
Garden Grove, CA
Santa Clarita, CA
Las Vegas, NV
Reno, NV

CANADA

Coquitlam,
British Columbia
Mississauga, Ontario
Toronto, Ontario
Vancouver,
British Columbia

COLORADO

Candelas, CO
Carbon Valley, CO
Castle Rock, CO
Commerce City, CO
Denver, CO
Peyton, CO
Windsor, CO
Farmington, NM
Lehi, UT
Saint George, UT
Laramie, WY

DAKOTA-MONTANA

Brandon, SD
Dickinson, ND
Minot, ND

MICHIGAN

Detroit, MI
Fenton, MI
Macomb, MI
Mansfield, OH
Willoughby, OH

MINNESOTA

North Liberty, IA
Collinsville, IL
Saint Paul, MN

NEBRASKA

Kansas City, KS
Wichita, KS
Joplin, MO
Omaha, NE

NORTH ATLANTIC

Dix Hills, NY
Watertown, NY
Woodside, NY
Durham, NC
Fayetteville, NC
Huntersville, NC
Jacksonville, NC
Harrisburg, PA
Fredericksburg, VA

N WISCONSIN

Manitowoc, WI

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Anchorage, AK
Boise, ID
Hayden, ID
North Nampa, ID
Renton, WA

SOUTH ATLANTIC

Delray Beach, FL
Parrish, FL
Trinity, FL
Atlanta, GA
Canton, GA
Baton Rouge, LA
Hendersonville, NC
Aiken, SC
Bluffton, SC
Moncks Corner, SC
Rock Hill, SC
Chattanooga, TN
Crossville, TN
Morristown, TN
Castries, St. Lucia
Grand Anse, Grenada
St. John's, Antigua

SOUTH CENTRAL

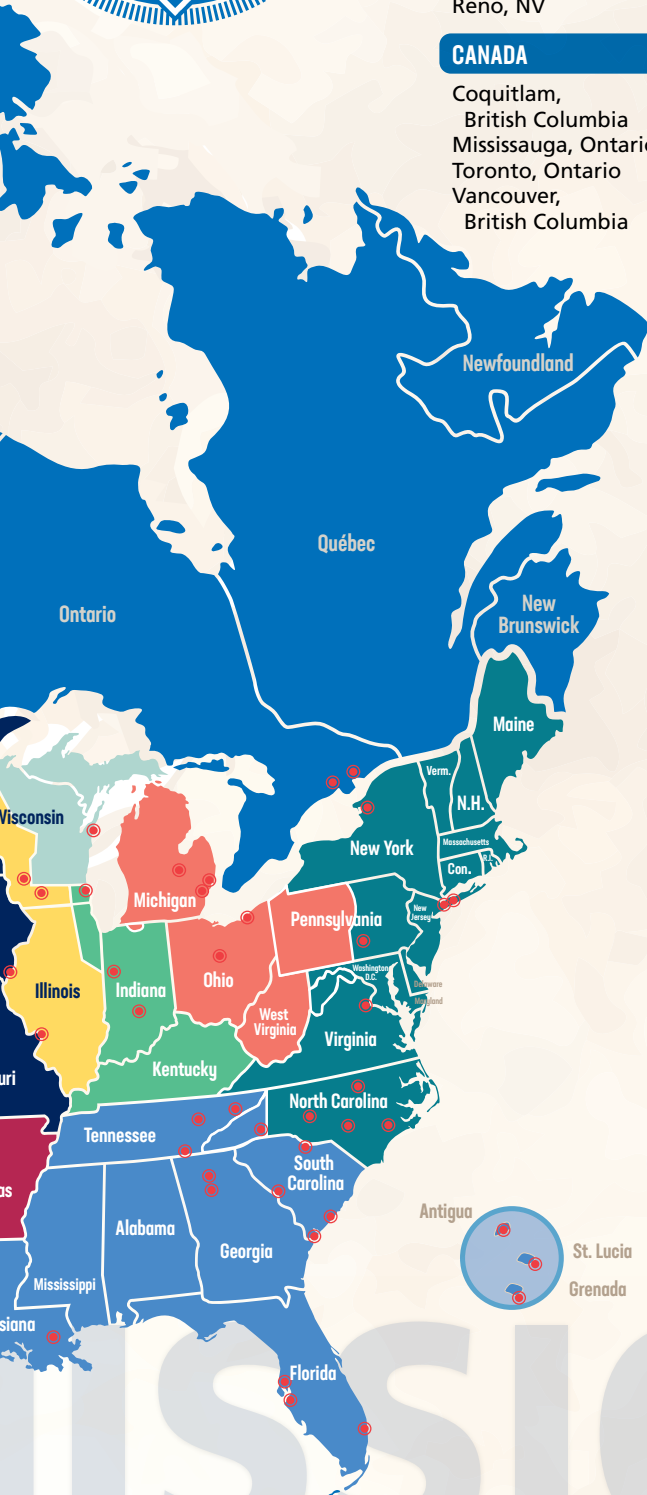
Amarillo, TX
Conroe, TX
Houston, TX
Hutto, TX
Keller, TX
Killeen, TX
Liberty Hill, TX
Rockwall, TX
Tyler, TX
Victoria, TX
Waco, TX
West San Antonio, TX

SE WISCONSIN

Greenwood, IN
Lafayette, IN
Milwaukee, WI

W WISCONSIN

Burlington, IA
Mt. Horeb, WI
Richland Center, WI



LEARN MORE
ABOUT WELS
HOME MISSION
CHURCHES.





MISSION PARTNERS
44 countries



EXPLORATORY MISSION WORK
18 countries/new mission fields



LEARN MORE ABOUT
WELS WORLD
MISSION FIELDS.



WEL

*Countries where missionaries reside

PASTORAL STUDIES Institute

The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI), a partnership between WELS Joint Missions and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, provides pre-seminary and seminary training to North American students from a variety of countries and cultures. PSI also consults with regional World Missions teams and sister churches around the world on their theological education programs and coordinates advance degree programs and visiting instructors upon request.

Faces of Faith – Semson Lor

I remember being in high school 10 years ago and people would ask me if I wanted to become a pastor, just like my father (Daniel Lor – Trinity Hmong, Manitowoc, Wis.). I would automatically answer “no” without giving it a second thought. This all changed when I left home and lived by myself. Suddenly everything I had learned growing up in the Lutheran church became something of the past. But as I fell into sin and personal struggles, the Holy Spirit kept tugging at my heart. I knew this wasn’t how God wanted me to live my life. As a child and a teen, I did not think much about my faith. But when struggles came, the foundations of my faith were what I could fall back on for hope and comfort. **Even though I tried so hard to run away from the Lord, he was always pursuing me and being true to his promises that he had given to me in my baptism.** I moved back home and became obsessed with reading scripture and studying theology and our Lutheran doctrine. I also started helping my father out at church, and I fell in love with ministry. It’s been a great blessing to be able to study in the PSI program. I’ve been able to learn from great teachers who are equipping me to proclaim this message of forgiveness to a world that is hurting, depressed, scared, and have no hope. They need to know that they have a Savior that lived perfectly for us so God could wash away all their guilt and sin. **Though we may hurt, though we may suffer depression, though we may still be scared, we now have hope.**



FAST FACTS

- PSI is currently training **25 students** from nine different people groups in 16 locations throughout North America.
- **Rev. David Bivens** joined the PSI team as an instructor during the 2021-2022 school year.



DEAR FRIENDS OF MISSIONS,

It isn't hard to find out what God wants us to do with his Good News. The angel told the women at the empty tomb, "Go tell the disciples." Jesus told John's disciples, "Go and tell John what you see and hear." Jesus sent his followers to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." Into the mess of this world Jesus has sent us to share wonderful news. Wars, famines, pestilence, and hardship cannot take away the gift he has given. Jesus lives. Forgiveness is won. Eternal life is yours. It is a high honor to join you in supporting efforts to bring this news into the mass of eight billion people who live with us on this planet.

Jesus says, "Go and tell," and he gives us every gift we need to carry out this work to the ends of the earth. Your prayers, consideration, and gifts allow us to send workers into this harvest field. It is a simple task that will occupy our time until the Savior comes again. May God bring many, many more to his eternal rest.

Serving with you in Christ,

PASTOR LARRY SCHLOMER
World Missions administrator

**WELS WORLD MISSIONS IS
PRIVILEGED TO BE YOUR ARM
THAT REACHES OUT TO THE
WORLD.**

WELS World Missions conducts and encourages gospel outreach in 44 foreign countries and is exploring outreach opportunities in 18 prospective new mission fields. World Missions brings the light of God's Word through evangelism efforts, church planting, training national workers for ministry, and providing religious materials in foreign languages. Forty-seven world missionaries partner with almost 500 national pastors to conduct outreach and train more than 380 seminary students for service in Christ's kingdom. The advance of technology around the world has allowed us to reach out with the gospel through the Internet into places that were before unreachable.

GOSPEL
OUTREACH IN
44
FOREIGN
COUNTRIES

18
PROSPECTIVE
NEW MISSION
FIELDS





WORLD Missions

WORLD MISSIONS SUPPORTS MISSION WORK:

- on **Native American reservations**, where the gospel has been shared on the Apache reservations in Arizona for more than 125 years, and exploratory mission work is beginning on other reservations throughout North America;
- in **Africa**, where missionaries partner with national church bodies in six countries and are exploring outreach in at least seven more countries throughout the continent;
- in **Asia**, where the two missionary teams have joined together to equip, encourage, and empower others to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to 1.8 billion unreached souls;
- in **Latin America**, where hundreds of thousands of people are being reached through *Academia Cristo* online courses and more than 40 individuals are being trained to plant a church;
- in **Europe**, where missionaries partner with national churches to train the next generation of church leaders and bring the true gospel to countries without a strong Lutheran presence;
- and through **Multi-Language Productions**, which has produced materials in more than 56 languages and reaches tens of thousands of English-speakers in more than 30 different countries through the TELL online training platform.



TRAINING
380+
SEMINARY
STUDENTS

CONFESSIONAL
CHRISTIAN CONTENT
CREATED IN

56
LANGUAGES

FORTY-SEVEN WORLD
MISSIONARIES PARTNER
WITH ALMOST

500

NATIONAL PASTORS TO
CONDUCT OUTREACH



EUROPE

The Europe mission team partners to share Christ's grace in Albania, Bulgaria, London and the U.K., Portugal, Russia, and Ukraine while supporting sister church bodies in seven additional European countries. Currently there are two WELS missionaries residing in Europe.

Faces of Faith— Anya and Sonya

"I always knew there was a God, but I didn't know him." Anya is typical of many who grew up in the Soviet Union. Her parents were "believers" who didn't know Christ. But Jesus knew her.



Many years ago, a friend invited Anya to our church in Russia. Sermon by sermon, class by class, the Holy Spirit changed Anya's heart. Anya's daughter, Sonya, was baptized as an infant. **"I don't remember a time when I didn't know Jesus. God is always with us and will be with us even if something bad happens."**

After the Russian people's worlds changed in February 2022, Seminarian Andre Gydlov continues to spiritually care for Anya and Sonya and all our brothers and sisters in Christ in Iskitim. He says, "I'm preaching the same things I always did, but now it means more. People are coming to listen. We're citizens of heaven who own eternal treasures no one can take!"

FROM LUKE AND JENNIFER WOLFGRAMM,
missionary family from Russia



OUTREACH IN

13

EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES

FAST FACTS

- WELS is partnering with the **Ukrainian Lutheran Church** to provide humanitarian aid for their members and other local citizens and refugees.
- **Missionary Mike Hartman** (pictured bottom right) and his family have moved to London, England, where he will serve a group already gathering in London, connect with contacts from other sister church bodies, and launch outreach efforts.
- **Missionary Luke Wolgramm** (pictured bottom left) and his wife, Jennifer, who were living in Russia continue to encourage Russian Lutheran Church members from afar. They will most likely relocate to another location in Europe to partner with sister church bodies in their theological education and outreach efforts.
- The European members of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) met in **Albania** in May 2022 for a regional conference.





Hmong Fellowship Church - Vietnam

ASIA

The Asia One Team comprises 17 missionaries serving 16 different countries throughout Asia. The team, largely based in Thailand and Hong Kong, partner with God's people in Asia to equip, encourage, and empower others to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to 1.8 billion unreached souls throughout Asia. Asia Lutheran Seminary continues to provide theological education across the continent.

Faces of Faith - Huajvam

My name is Huajvam. I'm a Hmong Christian living in Vietnam. I personally witnessed the persecution of believers in my country. Then I came to realize that I, myself, also persecuted the members of my congregation through man-made rules and traditions. I felt ashamed before my Lord Jesus. I claimed to be a believer of Christ, but I really trusted in my rules and traditions for my salvation, not Christ. Only in Christ are my sins forgiven.



Then an unexpected change came into my life: the teaching from WELS. **The biblical teaching that sinners are saved by God's grace alone. This pure teaching has changed me from head to toe.** It gave me a new perspective

about myself and my faith in Jesus. Since this unexpected change has come, the Lord has tremendously blessed my ministry. People are coming to Christ daily through that message, a Christ-centered message. My district has gained more than 20,000 members in the last few years. Praise the Lord for his love toward a sinner like me!

FAST FACTS

- Asia Lutheran Seminary is teaching 56 online students, 29 more than previous semesters.
- There are 31 church leaders or pastors being mentored in East Asia.
- 53 small groups gather weekly in East Asia.



DID YOU KNOW?

Instruction began with a new group of **60 students** in the Hmong Fellowship Church of Vietnam.

SOUTH ASIA

Faces of Faith – Abdullah

Abdullah and his mother were kicked out of their home and village when they converted from Islam to Christianity. And yet every day they set aside a handful of rice so that they have something to share with the poor. Abdullah rides a bicycle to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in one of the most dangerous areas of this Muslim nation. He befriends the people, prays for them, and tells them of the love of Jesus. An imam (a Muslim cleric) who is a fish farmer became friends with Abdullah. As they sat in front of his home, he told Abdullah how his fishponds were not producing fish. Abdullah said a simple prayer asking that, if it is God's will, the imam's ponds would produce fish. And they did! In great numbers.

Later this imam became a believer in Christ. At his baptism, a mob of over 500 people came to kill him and those involved. The imam spoke with the people, and by the grace of God his life and the lives of those with him were spared. **Abdullah continues to share the gospel of Jesus—even though his life is in danger. And God is giving him an abundant harvest of fish and souls.**

FROM THE WELS FRIENDLY COUNSELOR to South Asia

EAST ASIA

Faces of Faith – Saul

I was a Buddhist follower before. I know there are many divisions in Buddhism, so I did research and studied each denomination. When I became a Christian, I also studied to figure out which church I wanted to join. Then I realized that there are even more denominations in the Christian church than in Buddhism. It took me a year and a half before I got to know the Lutheran church.

When I started to dig, one of the first things I found was a YouTube series on the small catechism by an American pastor located in East Asia. He mentioned law and gospel, and I wanted to know more. As I was searching, I found another YouTube video from an East Asian pastor. The gospel touched my heart, and I contacted the East Asia Lutheran Church and joined their Life of Christ class. **After all these years, I found the truth. I am sure now. I got baptized and joined the Christian Studies Certificate Program offered at Asia Lutheran Seminary to learn even more.**

WELS SUPPORTS

13

NON-FORMAL
SCHOOLS
IN PAKISTAN



DID YOU KNOW?

WELS Christian Aid & Relief partnered with the Asia mission team and our sister church in India (pictured left) to provide **COVID-19 food relief** packages throughout the country.



New mission station in **San Pedro, Laguna, Philippines.**



FAST FACTS

- In 2021, another 18 men completed the pastoral training program in **India**. Over 130 more men have requested to join the next pre-seminary class.
- Three self-study audio courses have been translated into Tagalog (spoken in the Philippines) and are now available on the **TELL website**.
- The church in **Nepal** spends a year instructing believers in God's Word, and then hosts a day of celebration where they confess their faith and pledge themselves to confessional Lutheranism.
- WELS supports 13 non-formal schools in **Pakistan** that teach 325 children from 3-6 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- The Asia One Team is in contact with leadership from a Lutheran church body in **Myanmar**. Church members have been scattered due to the coup that began in January 2021. Our missionaries have provided humanitarian aid in partnership with Christian Aid & Relief, and we pray conditions may improve enough for regular instruction to continue in the future.

GIVE A GIFT

to support WELS World Missions by scanning the QR code with your phone or visiting wels.net/wmgift.



NATIVE AMERICAN MISSION

The Native American mission serves eight churches, one preaching station, and two Lutheran elementary schools on the Fort Apache Reservation and the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona. The mission is currently served by five missionaries, two national pastors, and one national evangelist.

Faces of Faith—Lolly

Ermon “Lolly” Stover was in a dark place. Battling addictions and alcoholism, he felt spiritually dead. The day came when he couldn’t handle it anymore. Remembering the encouragement to “take it to the cross” from his catechism days at the Lutheran Church of the Open Bible on the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation, he cried out to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to take charge of his life and knew that Jesus alone could help him.

He started attending Bible studies at the Apache Christian Training School (ACTS) and at Open Bible. His life is a living testimony to God’s power to change lives in every way.

“I just want to be different,” he tells people, **“I can do that through my Savior, Jesus Christ.”**

He is now a suicide prevention program director on the reservation, and he recognizes that it’s the front line of a spiritual battle between God and Satan. He continues to try to help people, always being ready to give an answer for the hope that he has. When he’s not at work you’ll find him posting Bible meditations on Facebook, teaching Bible studies at church, and continuing to attend ACTS classes to sharpen his Bible skills.

FROM DAN RAUTENBERG,
Native American mission field coordinator



40%

OF THE BAPTISMS
IN THE AZ-CA DISTRICT
ARE FROM APACHE
CONGREGATIONS

FAST FACTS

- **40% of the baptisms** in the Arizona-California district are from Apache congregations.
- While attendance was down due to COVID restrictions, **two congregations increased giving last year by at least 75%.**
- Builders for Christ just completed a new teacher housing unit to accommodate more teachers at the growing **Peridot-Our Savior’s Lutheran School** on the San Carlos Apache Reservation.
- The **Native Christians Network** has drafted plans to take the gospel to other Native American reservations, and the team looks forward to carrying them out in person as COVID travel restrictions have finally ceased on most reservations.



Builders for Christ helped build a new duplex for teachers at Peridot-Our Savior’s Lutheran School.

LATIN AMERICA

The Latin America mission team uses *Academia Cristo*, an online outreach and training tool, to share God's grace with as many people as possible as well as identify and train potential leaders who can plant churches.

FAST FACTS

- Over 500,000 people have downloaded the *Academia Cristo* mobile app in the first two years since it was launched.
- **500 people** are currently receiving live training in Lutheran doctrine and how to teach God's Word.
- There are **40+ students in level two** of the *Academia Cristo* program that are already being trained to plant a church.
- In October 2021, WELS' sister churches throughout Latin America formed a **new synod** that will allow these individual churches to do mission work and train pastors together. This new synod will also welcome any new churches that are formed out of *Academia Cristo* training efforts.

Faces of Faith – Alejandro

Alejandro Cingolani, a butcher, was a barely practicing Catholic who lived in Argentina. His only church experience was a Catholic confirmation class as a teen. The death of Alejandro's and his wife, Viviana's, firstborn son when he was a toddler left them devastated. Alejandro's drug use left his family with financial problems.



He started searching for help right as the pandemic sent families into lockdown. First, he saw an *Academia Cristo* announcement on his Facebook feed. After taking 38 self-study lessons through *Academia Cristo*'s mobile app, he joined the Lutheran faith and continued working through 15 training courses via Zoom with a WELS missionary. When asked if he would like to

start a Bible study group to disciple others, he responded, "Well, yeah, but I'm a new Christian and don't really know how to teach." The Latin America mission team showed him how. He invited some people to study the Bible for a few weeks and then stopped. He got discouraged. Then we encouraged him to start with one disciple: his 11-year-old son, Eliel. Now they're reading through the Bible together in one year.

He laughs when he's told he'd make a good Old Testament priest, reading about all the bloody animal sacrifices. **Now he knows it's all about the blood of Christ, which cleans our conscience from sin. Now Alejandro the butcher serves the living God!**

FROM JOEL SUTTON, missionary in Paraguay



Latin America Missionary Andrew Johnston visiting an *Academia Cristo* student in Nicaragua.



MULTI-LANGUAGE PRODUCTIONS

Multi-Language Productions (MLP) has created more than 2.9 million video, audio, print, and online training resources in 56 languages to date. They have also introduced a new online Bible-based training platform called TELL (Think, Evaluate, Learn, and Lead), to bring the gospel to English-speakers around the world. With the Lord's blessing, the TELL Network will allow for the creation of new TELL platforms in additional languages in the future.

Faces of Faith—Dylan

My name is Dylan Munro. I am from East London, South Africa. I had followed many religions, but at one point I had taken an interest in a Buddhist sect. After being initiated and following a guru (master), I became a Buddhist monk for 18 years. However, I could not reach a deep peace or calm my heart. I had a fear of dying,

so I practiced 18 hours of meditation a day at times. **But when God has**

a calling in your life, he always

wins. The Holy Spirit worked in my heart, and there was a soft voice saying, "Try me. Follow me."

It took a while to break away from Buddhism, but God set me free.

I have been a Christian for seven years now.

I have been learning the Word of God using the TELL method. It has encouraged me to continue to discover something new in the Bible every day. The TELL method helps me build up confidence to teach others about the Word of God, and teaching using the TELL method has brought me closer to God's throne.



FAST FACTS

- The TELL app has been downloaded over **125,000 times**.
- There are **32,000 active users** on the TELL app.
- **250+ students** have enrolled in live TELL group classes.
- There are **30+ countries** represented in the TELL student body.

250+

STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN LIVE
TELL CLASSES



DID YOU KNOW?

MLP Missionary Terry Schultz creates culturally appropriate worship music and art to be used in sharing the gospel across WELS world mission fields.



Visiting the Lutheran Church of Cameroon

AFRICA

The WELS One Africa Team currently works with established church bodies in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zambia, partnering in outreach and assisting with theological education programs. The team is also working with groups or exploring outreach in seven additional African countries and following up on contacts identified through Multi-Language Production's TELL program. Currently, nine missionaries serve on the One Africa Team.

FAST FACTS

- Over **80 Christians** living in **20 different countries** have contacted One Africa Team with requests for ministry assistance.
- The One Africa Team is working with a church body that serves 75 congregations in four regions of **Tanzania**.
- Four African missionaries teach Bible courses online through the **TELL program**.
- **175 students** from Africa have enrolled in online TELL courses.
- **Obadiah Lutheran Church in Uganda** drafted a request for doctrinal unity/fellowship with WELS. The prayer is that they will be brought into fellowship at the 2023 synod convention.
- The **Lutheran Church of Ethiopia** opened a new school for nursery through grade 4 with an initial enrollment of 759.



The **Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ-Kenya** celebrated the **baptisms** of six children and one teen in Agogom, Kenya, in January 2022.

Faces of Faith—Timothy

Timothy Mulando (pictured right) was content with his life in Zambia. Farming during the rainy season, fishing during the dry season. Born and raised a Methodist, he knew Christ. Then the Methodists moved out and the Lutherans moved in. Timothy joined the new Lutheran church in 1953. Over the years, he served as a lay preacher and evangelist, and eventually began studies to become a pastor. He spent his vicar year north of Lusaka, Zambia. There was no congregation. No converts. But he went to work, and a church grew. He was ordained in 1979 and served at four different parishes during his time as a pastor. At age 71, he retired and returned to his home village and family farm.

But other fields were still calling for workers! After official “retirement,” Pastor Mulando served a vacancy in a nearby village. He also served a vacancy at the three different churches of his home parish after the pastor accepted a call away. **Today, at age 92, Pastor Mulando doesn’t fish anymore in the streams and rivers. We thank him for all those years he spent fishing for souls in the ripening harvest fields.**

FROM JOHN HARTMANN, missionary in Zambia



75

CONGREGATIONS IN
FOUR REGIONS OF
TANZANIA



Save the date! June 10, 2023

Join your brothers and sisters in Christ from around the world for Taste of Missions, a hybrid event occurring every summer. By combining an online event with an in-person gathering at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wis., all WELS members can get a “taste of missions,” no matter where you might be around the world.

Taste of MISSIONS

June 10, 2023

- Inspirational worship
- Sample ethnic cuisine + view recipes
- Get to know missionaries
- Family-friendly activities



Learn more at tasteofmissions.com

CENTRAL AFRICA MEDICAL MISSION

The Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM) oversees the Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre, a permanent clinic in Zambia, and the Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi, where staff travel to five designated villages for a day of clinical work and care. Both clinics focus on providing Christian counseling and education, HIV testing and treatment, malaria treatment, wellness checks and immunizations for children, and treatment of other minor injuries or illnesses. CAMM partners with the Lutheran Church of Central Africa and WELS missionaries to help the spiritual and physical needs of people in Zambia and Malawi.

Faces of Faith—Crispin

Crispin Chikonka has been working as the Psychosocial Counselor at the Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre in Mwembeshi, Zambia. **As a Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) member, he leads clinic devotions and can see Jesus working through the clinic visitors every day.** Through those devotions or when coun-

seling patients, Crispin can feel God's presence in the clinic. He states, "His Word pulls us together when working as a team and respecting one another, and there is good communication among us at work."

While the clinic is at times full of many sick people, he finds joy in his work. Not only do these devotions boost the morale of the visiting patients, but Crispin is also fed with God's Word. He feels blessed when he observes his work environment and clinic building along with knowing that patient's concerns and ailments have been addressed. The parable of the ten lepers resonates with Crispin, **"Then he said to them, rise and go; your faith has made you well (Luke 17:19)."**

FROM ANGELA SIEVERT, CAMM public relations coordinator

FAST FACTS

- The clinic in Zambia delivered **197 babies** in 2021.
- Almost **15,500 immunizations** were administered in 2021.
- The **Lutheran Mobile Clinic in Malawi** is now completely staffed by Malawian nationals.
- Altogether, CAMM clinics serve close to **80,000 patients** a year.



80,000

PATIENTS SERVED
EVERY YEAR AT
CAMM CLINICS

Families benefited from **transportation** CAMM offered to and from therapy sessions.

WELS Mission Journeys

Start your lifelong journey of service and outreach through a **short-term mission trip**

Make Christian friends as you work side-by-side with a home mission church or a world mission field and be inspired to share the story of God's work and how all people need to learn of God's salvation through Jesus when you get back!

Apply today and consider how your church, campus ministry, or other group might be able to walk together in the Great Commission through a short-term mission trip.



KEVIN SCHULTZ, *home missionary*
The Vine in Hayden, Idaho

"The Mission Journeys team that came to Hayden was a blessing to our congregation. Their enthusiasm and commitment to mission work was contagious. Every person on the team had a servant's heart and wanted to share Jesus with as many people as possible. We were truly blessed."

Learn more and apply at
wels.net/missionjourneys.

