

CHRIST ALONE, CHRIST FOREVER

LCC'S MISSIONS AND SOCIAL MINISTRY SERVICES

MISSION NEWSLETTER 2017



“He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.”

– Psalm 62:2 –

Mission and Social Ministry Services

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LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA
ÉGLISE LUTHÉRIENNE du CANADA



500
Reformation
Five Hundred Years 1517-2017


The logo features the number '500' in a light blue, sans-serif font. Overlaid on the '0's is the word 'Reformation' in a black, gothic-style font. The letter 'o' in 'Reformation' is replaced by a circular emblem containing a red heart and a cross. Below the word 'Reformation' is the text 'Five Hundred Years 1517-2017' in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



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Table of Contents	3
Introduction from Rev. Dr. Leonardo Neitzel	4
Cambodia	6
Thailand	8
Ukraine	10
Honduras	12
Costa Rica	14
Nicaragua	16
Final Thoughts	18
More Information	20

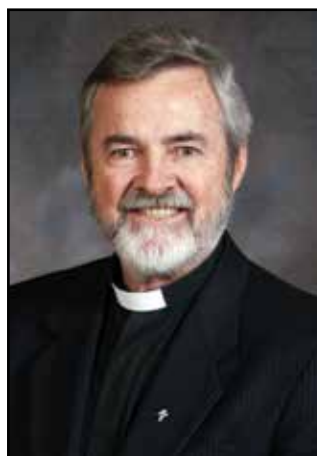


Nicaraguan youth receive Holy Communion during the ILSN's national youth gathering.

INTRODUCTION FROM REV. DR. LEONARDO NEITZEL

Among the great blessings we experience in Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC) are the biblical themes we adopt for our synodical conventions each triennium. We recall the most recent themes:

- *Our Lord for Every Land* (1988)
- *Lengthen Your Cords, Strengthen Your Stakes* (1990)
- *The Gospel: Power to Live, Power to Give* (1993)
- *Called by His Name—Sent by His Spirit* (1996)
- *Prepare for Action* (1999)
- *With Great Boldness: That All May Know His Name* (2002)
- *Proclaiming His Faithfulness* (2005)
- *Give Jesus Glory—His Calling, Our Praise* 2008
- *In Your Light, We See Light—Psalm 36:9* (2011)
- *Come to Him who answers prayer—Psalm 65:2* (2014)



LCC's New Theme

For 2017, LCC's convention theme is *Christ Alone, Christ Forever*. As with previous themes, this is a timely call to us to stand faithful on the firm foundation of the faith we have received. It is a call to reach out to a world which is starving and sinking in sin and

INTRODUCTION

darkness. And it is a call to confess, proclaim and provide for our neighbours Christ, the Bread of Life for eternity. Jesus Christ is the Great “I Am.” He is the One who forgives sins, who gives life and salvation. There is no other like Him.

He is the Light of the world and our Righteousness. He is our Living Bread and the Water of Life, who alone quenches humanity’s deepest hunger and thirst. He is Strength and Comfort to all who are downcast and in distress. Through baptism He calls and marks people by His own name, and makes them His own. He is the Eternal Lord and King, the Resurrection and the Life, the One Who was, Is, and Is to come, the Almighty.

Because of its own blindness to God, its hardness of mind and heart, the world despises this Lord and the abundance of Life He freely provides. Despite this rejection and opposition from the people around us, the Lord calls His church to continue reaching out in love and mercy—as on a rescue mission—to seek and save the lost. For God has no desire that any be lost and condemned. He completed His sacrifice in the place and on behalf of all human beings, so that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

The 2017 Mission Newsletter presents just a few snapshots of what the Lord Jesus has accomplished in the lives of people through the missions and social ministry of Lutheran Church–Canada this year—how communities have been graced by His love and mercy.

Christ Alone and Christ Forever in Cambodia

After more than a year of internal administrative problems, the Lutheran Church in Cambodia has restructured and reorganized under a new name: Cambodia Lutheran Church (CLC). Its constitution and bylaws have been revised and adopted, and CLC is fully registered through the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) with the Ministry of Cults and Religion, a Government umbrella organization responsible for the registration of churches in Cambodia.

This is a blessed achievement for the church, which will hold its Convention in celebration of the 500th Anniversary of Lutheranism in 2017, and also roster all congregations, pastors, and deaconesses who have subscribed to the Lutheran Confessions and the Constitution of the new synod.

LCC has been privileged to assist the CLC financially since the reorganizing process began in 2016. Support for previous projects in Cambodia will also be beginning anew. Major projects supported by LCC in Cambodia include: deaconesses' stipends; children's education and feeding programs; theological education seminars for church workers; sister-to-sister seminars through the Lutheran Women's Missionary League of Canada; and other social ministry and humanitarian projects.



Members of the the Cambodia Lutheran Church's Board of Directors and Planning Committee hold meetings.



Rev. Dr. Leonard Harms, LCC's Mission Advisor for Southeast Asia, meets with Cambodian church leaders.

Christ Alone and Christ Forever in Thailand

The Lord has blessed the Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church (TCLC) with faithful pastors and lay leaders, and has opened mission opportunities to ethnic groups in the North Chiang Mai region. In the Phang Nga Province, missionaries Suchart Chujit and Suchart Srikakarn (now Pastor Yo), continue ministering to their congregations and taking every opportunity to proclaim the Gospel in their communities.

LCC and TCLC have consulted and agreed to start the training of three candidates in this region to assist both missionaries first as deacons, and then as missionaries, should they desire to pursue the pastoral ministry through the Luther Institute Southeast Asia in the TCLC. Training started in June 2017 and LCC is committed to continue coordinating and raising funds in support of the program.

This initiative is a great blessing for the Lutheran congregations and mission in the South. Of the current missionaries, one is full-time while the other is part-time, and yet serve six congregations and preaching stations. The three candidates, God willing, will be a great strength as the church considers the succession plan for the missionaries in the South.

LCC is also privileged to fully support Pastor Chujit's ministry and mission in Camobida, along with several mission projects and long-term humanitarian aid in the region of Kokkloi, Takuapa.



Members of the congregations in Khok Kloi and Takuapa enjoy a picnic following a joint Easter service.



The congregation in Khok Kloi listens as Pastor Suchat Chujit preaches during Sunday worship.

Christ Alone and Christ Forever in Ukraine

Despite threats of war, in the midst of fire and smoke, the Gospel of the Lord Christ continues to be proclaimed in Ukraine, with people responding to the Gospel and being welcomed through baptism into the Christian faith. Pastors from the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine (SELCU) report hopeful news on the harvest.

Bishop Aleksander Urchenko reports that visitation to the prison in Nikolaev continues to bear remarkable fruit. Outreach events have welcomed more than 80 people, while there have been more than 60 opportunities for private prayer and discussion with inmates. More than 27 inmates have confessed faith in Christ, with 19 of them baptized.

Rev. Oleg Schewtschenko reports that the summer's intensive Bible camps, seminars, and mission outreach have likewise been fruitful. Rev. Roland Syens' visit to Ukraine to teach at the Days of Faith conference has blessed many, with at least one woman coming to faith through the event.

The church has also been helping refugees fleeing unrest in the eastern part of the country. SELCU has been helping refugees in Novaya Kahovka, Nikolaev, and Odessa with clothing, school uniforms, and books and other school supplies, as well as with food and medical support. Opportunities continue to arise, though financial support is needed to continue developing this outreach effort, along with outreach.

Opportunities are enormous for LCC and SELCU to continue serving in Ukraine. In particular, care ministry to refugees, the homeless, orphans and orphanages, and mentally and physically challenged individuals remain an important service opportunity. LCC fully supports one missionary in Nikolaev; the seminary program in Osatovo, Odessa; the prison ministry in Nikolaev; orphan ministry; hospitalized children; summer Bible camps and Vacation Bible Schools; and several other projects.



Some of the participants who came out to hear LCC President Robert Bugbee lecture at SELCU's seminary as part of the Ukrainian church's Reformation anniversary celebrations.



Lutheran Church–Canada pastor Rev. Harald Schoubye visits with orphan children in Ukraine who benefit from LCC and SELCU's joint ministry.

Christ Alone and Christ Forever in Honduras

Nicaraguan missionary Junior Martinez continues reaching out with the Gospel to all peoples and ages in Honduras. The congregation currently counts among its ministry outreach 27 adults, 13 confirmed adults, 40 children in Sunday school, 30 baptized children, and 14 youth. Outreach opportunities continue to expand, with Pastor Martinez noting new occasions for ministry in barrios, schools, police stations in both the city and surrounding rural region of La Paz.

Honduran Deacon Tulio Meza continues to reach out with the Word of God to the population in the Comayaguela area of Tegucigalpa. He has a good support team of helpers, and leads lay services, Bible studies, social work, and reaches out to children and youth. His congregation plans special outreach events for the seasons of the church year, when he and members deliver food hampers to families in that area. Comayaguela has an average church attendance of 20 adults and 15 children. There is a very active youth group as well.

Through the support of the Office of International Missions (OIM) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and St. Luke Lutheran Church in Olviedo, Florida, LCC is privileged to fully maintain the mission work and care ministry in both locations.



Children participate in craft making as part of Sunday School classes at the La Paz congregation in Honduras.



Several members of the youth group in Comayagua pose in front of a picture of Luther's Rose.

Christ Alone and Christ Forever in Costa Rica

Mission outreach has expanded in the city of Cartago, which now sees ministry in two different locations. Missionary Edmundo Retana and his wife, Deaconess Betty Retana, continue focused on organizing and registering the church with the government. The main outreach effort has been to youth and to women. Several Bible study retreats are planned yearly for both groups. The Bible studies have been strengthening in biblical knowledge, Christian nurture, and outreach.

Church leaders and youth have taken part in special activities of the Iglesia Luterana Sínodo de Nicaragua on several occasions. A joint worship and outreach to celebrate the 500th Reformation anniversary is being planned to take place in October in Chinandega, Nicaragua.

LCC is privileged to fully support the mission in Cartago, Costa Rica, jointly with Concordia Lutheran Mission Society, Lutheran Women's Missionary League Canada, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Abbotsford, B.C.



Members of the Lutheran mission in Cartago, Costa Rica gather together for regular Bible studies.



LCC Mission Executive Leonardo Neitzel participates in a Costa Rican celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Christ Alone and Christ Forever in Nicaragua

LCC continues to work in the large mission field of Nicaragua along with the Iglesia Luterana Sinodo de Nicaragua (ILSN). One great blessing experienced recently has been the large number of children confirmed in the Lutheran faith, as well as the considerable number of youth taking active part in the church's mission. Pastors have focused on developing youth retreats and worship services which involve and reach out to youth. National Youth Gatherings take place regularly, with planning underway to start holding regular regional youth gatherings in three main areas: Matagalpa, Chinandega, and Managua. The National Youth Gatherings regularly see an attendance of about 250 youth.

Many of the children who first become associated with the church through children's feeding and education program are now learning to play keyboard and participate in congregational music through singing and playing. The ILSN still has much to grow in terms of the formal Lutheran liturgy and congregational hymn singing. A new Lutheran Hymnal is about to be published in the Spanish language, which will be a great help in the area of liturgics and hymnody for Nicaragua.

LCC supplies the financial resources needed for the training of church workers in Central America. Church workers have doubled in number in the past five years and LCC is committed to supporting their continuing education through grants from The Marvin Schwan Foundation.

Tremendous advancement is also being experienced in the children's education computer program. The majority of deaconesses have now received training in basic computer skills, and are using laptops in their congregations to teach computer skills to children. One church is even making basic computer training available to the larger community, and making new ministry connections in this way.

LCC thanks Concordia Lutheran Mission Society and Lutheran Women's Missionary League Canada for their support of work in Nicaragua.



ILSN Pastor Anastacio welcomes two new church members to celebrate Holy Communion for the first time.



ILSN Pastor Jeronimo shows off the “fruits” of the labour in the Nicaraguan church’s agricultural program.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We could say so much more about the mission work and humanitarian support our Canadian church is privileged to be a part of around the world. We thank God for His blessings on these mission fields. May our message and work ever proclaim, Christ Alone, Christ Forever!

Please remember LCC's mission churches in your prayers:

- The Cambodia Lutheran Church
- The Thailand Concordia Lutheran Church
- The Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Ukraine
- The Lutheran Church Synod of Nicaragua
- Missions in Honduras
- Missions in Costa Rica



Children in one of the Lutheran Church Synod of Nicaragua's feeding programs look forward to a healthy, free lunch.



Members of the Lutheran mission in Costa Rica take part in Bible Study together on a regular basis.



Approximately 60 people gathered for the installation of LCC's missionary to Ukraine, Rev. Oleksiy Navrotskyy, as pastor in Nikolaev.

For more news on LCC's Missions and Social Ministry Services, and to donate online, visit www.lutheranchurch.ca. Be sure also to read the Mission Section in *The Canadian Lutheran* and to watch for regular updates at CanadianLutheran.ca.

For further information on LCC's Missions and Social Ministry Services, contact:

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