

South Asian Ministry

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MISSIONS



In 2017, the WELS Joint Mission Council began a new South Asian Ministry focused on reaching out to South Asians residing in North America. This ministry is being led by Pastor Paul and his wife Aneela, South Asian natives who were forced to flee their home country. Pastor Paul graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 2017 after completing classes through the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) program.

The first location for South Asian ministry is in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. Christ Lutheran Church in Pewaukee serves as the host of an International Friendship Center (IFC), which provides programs and activities to engage internationals in the community by meeting any needs they may have. The IFC's goal is to share the gospel through "friendship evangelism". Friendship evangelism involves building genuine friendships through shared conversations, activities, and one-on-one time. Once mutual trust that naturally occurs through friendship is built up, sharing the gospel is much easier and our friends are more likely to listen *because* of that friendship.

Pastor Paul and Aneela regularly visit Hindu temples to meet new people and invite them to events and activities. They also frequently invite their South Asian friends to their home for dinners and Bible studies. Pastor Paul and Aneela's outgoing personalities and selfless hospitality is their unique way they reach out to those around them.

Initial outreach events in Pewaukee have included weekly get-togethers at a local park during the summer months, monthly Family Fun Nights, and English classes. Since the start of 2019, Family Fun Nights have provided a meal—featuring both American favorites and international cuisine—activities for each member of the family, and icebreaker games to encourage everyone to mingle and make new friends. Family Fun Nights have been successful and well-attended! English classes started in February 2019, when students were interviewed and placed in appropriate class levels. Christ Lutheran Church members volunteer to teach, and babysitting is available for students who bring their children to class. Each class night includes conversation time so that other volunteers can engage with the students in discussion and build friendships.

Jesus Christ commissions us to spread his gospel to the ends of the earth—and the ends of the earth are coming right to our doorsteps. An IFC could be a great addition to any WELS church. Though it would look unique in each setting, the goal of reaching our neighbors with the sweet gospel would be constant. If your church could benefit from starting an International Friendship Center, please email jmo@wels.net to see how WELS Joint Missions might be able to help.

Prayer for South Asian Ministry

May the Lord continue to bless the efforts at the International Friendship Center in Pewaukee, WI, as they reach out in fellowship to our international neighbors. May his Holy Spirit work in their hearts as they take the opportunity to share the joy of forgiveness and everlasting life because of Jesus' perfect life and death for us.