



Rev. Neil Birkholz was called by the WELS Joint Mission Council in 2020 to serve as Asian Ministry Coordinator under the WELS Joint Mission Council. He supports WELS outreach efforts that take place in Asian cross-cultural situations and coordinates the WELS Diaspora Ministry Facilitator (DMF) program that helps build connections between home and world mission efforts. This relatively new program assigns a stateside pastor to every World Mission team overseas. This stateside pastor, or DMF, helps facilitate connections and outreach between people-groups in North America and their home country. Rev. Birkholz also works with the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) as they train non-traditional students who are uniquely equipped to serve in Asian outreach situations. He encourages them through their studies while also helping identify their local mission fields where they can serve while taking classes.

Before graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Rev. Birkholz served with Kingdom Workers in Brazil (6 months) and with Friends of China (2 years). Upon graduating in 2014, he was assigned to the WELS World Mission field in East Asia where he served until the summer of 2020. He then accepted the call to serve as Asian Ministry Coordinator (75%) and quarter-time parish pastor (25%) at Reformation Lutheran Church in San Diego, Calif. In summer 2022 his current position as Asian Ministry Coordinator became full-time.

Rev. Birkholz, his wife Becky, and children Caleb, Malachi, Noah, and Kaia are blessed to be supported by their home congregation, Reformation, as they transitioned from living in Asia back to the United States. Becky teaches part-time at Reformation in the 7-8 grade classroom and their four children are all attending the school. Because of their location in San Diego and the outreach efforts of Reformation, the Birkholz family continues to have opportunities to connect with many Asian people in the local setting.