

# PORTUGAL



## Mission Overview

WELS' relationship with the Lutheran Church of Portugal (ILP) began in 1991 with a contact from Rev. Dr. Artur Villares, a graduate of a Lutheran seminary in Brazil and a professor at the University of Porto. The Lutheran Church of Portugal has two congregations: Holy Trinity in Porto and Savior in Lisbon. The Lutheran Church of Portugal provides devotional materials and encouragement to a network of contacts via Facebook and the internet throughout the Portuguese-speaking world.

The Lutheran Church of Portugal received Rev. António Canoa into fellowship in 2012, and added a third pastor to their church body when Rev. Denício Godoy was received into fellowship in 2020. Pastor Godoy conducts a media ministry from his home base in Santa Maria de Itabira in southeastern Brazil. New contacts from individuals and groups interested in confessional Lutheranism find their way to the Lutheran Church of Portugal's web presence from Brazil, Europe, Africa, and elsewhere—faster than the Lutheran Church of Portugal, with its limited manpower, can keep up.

## Fast Facts

- With around 260 million native speakers, Portuguese is the ninth most-spoken language in the world, ranking ahead of German, Japanese, and Korean. Most Portuguese speakers live in Brazil, but it is also the tenth most-spoken language in Africa.
- Brazil is larger than the continental U.S. by about 300,000 square miles. The Lutheran Church of Portugal literally has contacts in four corners of the country.
- The roughly 1 million Lutherans in Brazil (out of a total population of 216 million) are heavily concentrated in the country's three southernmost states. The Lutheran Church of Portugal is reaching persons in places where the Lutheran presence is minimal.
- Guinea-Bissau is a Muslim-majority nation in West Africa. Several years ago, a group here contacted the Lutheran Church of Portugal and asked, "Please send us some Lutheran teachers!" At the time, the Lutheran Church of Portugal was simply not able to respond.
- Rev. Ken Cherney from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, a Portuguese speaker, stays in touch with the Lutheran Church of Portugal and represents it to the WELS Europe mission team.

## Praying for Portugal

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the wonderful fellowship we share with the Lutheran Church-Portugal. Give us the vision, manpower, energy, and resources we need to share the good news of your unconditional love and forgiveness throughout the Portuguese-speaking world, all for the glory of your name and the well-being of immortal souls. In your name we pray. Amen.

