

# INDIA



## Mission Overview

With 1.4 billion people, India is (for now) the second-most populous country in the world—and the largest of all democracies. India has nearly as many official languages as all of Europe, and an even greater racial and cultural diversity. It is the birthplace of global religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Christians make up less than 3% of the country's total population. Although our sister church in India has only been in existence for a little over 20 years, Lutherans have been preaching and teaching there for more than two centuries already—and the good news of Jesus Christ has been heard on the Indian subcontinent since the time of apostles, nearly two millennia! Our sister church, with over 50 pastors serving more than 120 congregations or preaching stations, continues in that same hope as the many Indian Christians before them. Although outnumbered, they have a message of peace and life for all. Although they face growing persecution and any number of challenges, they put their hope in Christ, the light of all nations.

The global pandemic had a devastating effect on much of the world, including India. The congregations and pastors of our sister church were on lockdown for much of 2020, with churches and schools closed for months—including their seminary for training pastors. They gratefully received assistance from WELS Christian Aid and Relief to distribute food and other essential supplies to hundreds of families in and around their village churches. Now, they are looking for new, creative ways of building each other up in Christ and reaching out with the gospel. Church leaders are conducting a year-long rotation of regional meetings and workshops in six different locations. Graduates of the seminary program will receive continuing education and give each other mutual support. And lay leaders, such as elders and Sunday school teachers, will also receive training and encouragement for their roles in the churches.

## Fast Facts

- More than 100 men have received training from our sister church's seminary and pre-seminary programs.
- Congregations and pastors in their church body primarily speak either Telugu or Hindi (or both). Some can speak an additional 2-3 languages.

## Praying for India

Lord of the nations, watch over your faithful people around the world, including in India. Keep them safe from those who would cause them harm and strengthen their faith in your promises. Cause their witness to the word of Christ to be heard and received with joy by many. Assure them that they are not alone, but that they are united to the body of Christ around the world. Amen.

