

# WORLD MISSIONS

WELS WORLD MISSIONS UPDATE – FALL 2023/WINTER 2024

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**Dedication and graduation in Vietnam:** On Saturday, July 15, WELS and Hmong Fellowship Church representatives gathered to dedicate the new Theological Education Center just outside of Hanoi, Vietnam, that will house the theological education of pastors of the Hmong Fellowship Church. The next day they celebrated the graduation of 55 Hmong pastors from the theological training program. This seminary-level education has been carried out for more than six years either online or in temporary locations. These new pastors will now shepherd congregations in a church body comprising more than 140,000 members in more than 350 congregations. A dozen of these pastors were also commissioned to return to their home villages to instruct other Hmong pastors in biblical, Lutheran doctrine. The new building will serve as the permanent site for the training of the next group of pastors—60 now and another 60 next year.

In addition, online courses led by full-time professors Bounkeo Lor and Joel Nitz continue to be taught to rural church leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC). Learn more at [wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach](https://wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach).



**New missionary in Asia:** Rev. Justin Steinke graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in May 2023 and received his first ministry assignment to the Philippines. He and his family will be living in the country for a year, learning the language and immersing themselves in the culture, to learn how to best serve people there with the gospel. Rev. Steinke and his wife, Laura, previously served in East Asia with Friends Network, and they spent his vicar year at Sure Foundation in New York City learning how to best reach out interculturally. Learn more about mission work in Asia at [wels.net/asia](https://wels.net/asia).



**Mission work in New Zealand:** Over three years ago, a few South Asian Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM) members who immigrated from Hong Kong to New Zealand began meeting online with SALEM leadership for Bible Study and fellowship. This group, located in Auckland, has grown to more than 20 members. In January 2023, they began a monthly worship gathering facilitated by local leaders, and they continue to meet every week online and in person. Thirteen members of their group are currently enrolled in a foundational course at Asia Lutheran Seminary. These brothers and sisters welcome all newcomers to their group with open arms. Chinese people already make up five percent of the population of New Zealand, and experts predict that this number will grow to ten percent in the next 20-30 years. WELS is excited to continue assisting our sister church, SALEM, as it fosters this new mission in New Zealand.

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## Fellowship declared at Synod Convention:

WELS expanded its family of believers by declaring fellowship with Obadiah Lutheran Synod of Uganda and affirming fellowship with *Iglesia Cristo WELS Internacional* at the WELS Synod Convention.

Obadiah Lutheran Synod first came into contact with WELS in late 2017, with ensuing visits from missionaries and Malawian national pastors for training and fellowship discussions. It currently has 28 congregations, 9 preaching stations, and 1 mission field of South Sudanese refugees that serves more than 5,000

baptized members.

*Iglesia Cristo WELS Internacional* is a new synod that was formed in 2021 through the partnership of WELS sister churches across five countries throughout Latin America.



**TELL students in Africa:** More than 30 students throughout Africa who have taken self-led and live classes through TELL, an online Bible-based training program from Multi-Language Productions, are ready for the next steps in the program. This includes in-person visits with a WELS representative or sister church partner to have the necessary discussions for doctrinal agreement and to pair students with a mentor. These mentors will help them prepare to gather and lead local Growth Groups to share the saving message of the gospel. Stay up to date on progress at [wels.net/mlp](https://wels.net/mlp).



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We thank God for you! World Missions is grateful for the many, generous special gifts we receive throughout the year. Extraordinary things are happening all over the world every day. Your gift matters.

Please pray for the lost and consider how you can best make an impact on the millions of people who still need to hear the truth of the gospel. To give an immediate gift, go to [wels.net/wmgift](https://wels.net/wmgift). Watch with us as the Holy Spirit changes earthly lives and opens the door to eternal life for our brothers and sisters around the world.

**Medical mission in Kenya:** WELS Central Africa Medical Mission (CAMM) and the One Africa Team are exploring the potential of WELS partnering with the Lutheran Church in Mission for Christ-Kenya (LCMC-Kenya) and local medical personnel to offer a five-day medical camp to people living in the rural community of Kiangwaci, Kenya (about one hour from Nairobi). This first camp is tentatively being planned for early spring 2024. Learn more at [wels.net/camm](https://wels.net/camm).



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