

PELICAN MINISTRIES' NEWSLETTER - Fall 2024

Pelican Ministries of SW FL is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) in the LCMS, to support the missions of the following LCMS ethnic ministries *servicing our Hispanic and Haitian communities in their native languages.*

Spanish: **Pelican Lutheran Church (LC); Conexión LC; the Hispanic Mission at Peace LC;**

Haitian: **Bethlehem LC, Immokalee; SILOE LC; Fraternité Lutheran mission (NE Naples).**

November 11, 2024

Dear Friends in Christ,

I cannot believe that a full year has passed since our last newsletter!

The past year has been a whirlwind, and not just because of the hurricanes and tropical storms, which blew through our area! (It is FUNNY, but true!!) While our area suffered measurable damage from Hurricanes Helene and Milton, it was minor in contrast to the devastation caused in areas of central Florida, the "Big Bend", and throughout Georgia and the Carolinas. We pray for these as well as the Caribbean nations, which were battered by storms including Hurricane Rafael from early November.

These disasters serve as 'real-time reminders' that Christ's Mission is vital, time is of the essence, and God's Plan is playing out in our lives. The Lord Jesus will use everything necessary in order to open the eyes of the spiritually blind in order that they see their need for God's mercy. We just need to 'stand firm' and "be ready to give an answer" for our hope when the times come. With faithful followers of Jesus already in place in densely populated SW Florida, our timely testimony allows the Holy Spirit to do His work: that all may know Jesus Christ as their all-loving, Risen Savior and LIVE!

Over 2024, our combined immigrant ministries saw 15 households move out of the Greater Naples area due to high costs of living. The economic challenges that have plagued all of us 'established Americans', are impacting the newly arrived legal immigrants much, much harder. Even so, Jesus keeps leading people to our churches every Sunday!! Through our mercy works to help people, they come to know us; and through us, they learn about Jesus and His free forgiveness through faith in Him.

In a strange world of turbulence, spiritual darkness and storms, the LORD Jesus has established the **Pelican Ministries of SW Florida** as a lighthouse of hope, offering love, mercy, and provision through the love of Christ. In our care, the newly arrived immigrants learn useful skills, and they hear about a Savior who loves them, who paid for their sins with His own blood, and has a marvelous plan for their life.

With your prayers and generous financial support, you have equipped us to serve thousands of vulnerable, legal immigrants in a very intense area! Through our combined gifts from God, Jesus has accomplished HUGE feats, including scores of new believers, new churches, new deacons, and very soon new pastors and deaconesses!!

THANK YOU for your faithful prayers and support of this vital work of mission over 2024!! I hope that the details below bless you and fill you with hope, joy and peace in Christ and His powerful work in us!!!

BIG BLESSINGS over the past 12 Months

+24 Baptisms; 20 youth Confirmations and First Communions (*Hispanic & Haitian Ministries*)

+Installation of Pastor Mark Eisold at the Pelican Lutheran Church in Naples.

+The Lord granted AMOS the restored 501(c)(3) status – not for profit organization.

This required a lot of work from Pastors Eisold and Glander, working with a CPA and attorney.

The Lord Jesus Christ blessed these efforts, and restored this RSO to life and vitality again!

+A New Name for "AMOS": Now "doing business as"/DBA **Pelican Ministries of SW Florida**

All of the best things of the past are still here, with a better organizational structure for growth and the addition of new ministries under this renewed RSO (*Recognized Service Organization* of the LCMS). Plus, no more confusion with the *old name*, which solicits funds for immigration services.

+A Highly Gifted Board of Directors.

Pastors Eisold, Glander, Kanefke, DiBartolo, & Zehnder work with a tremendous new Board of Directors comprised of LCMS professionals, former missionaries, university professors, and church leaders. Together, they ensure that viable, ambitious plans are in place for serving the community, while also proclaiming Christ, and actively seeking to reach into new areas of need in south Florida.

AND.....

+Chartering a SECOND LCMS Hispanic congregation, CONEXIÓN Confessional Lutheran Church

+Installing Rev. Orlando Ramirez as pastor of the new congregation.

Two years ago, the Lord Jesus led Rev. Orlando Ramirez to Pastor Eisold, in search of solid, Biblical doctrine in Spanish. Over the next six months, the Good Lord moved Orlando to desire to serve in the LCMS. The Lord Jesus blessed their efforts; and in June, Orlando Ramirez was received as a Pastor in the LCMS !!

We continue to faithfully ...

- serve in densely populated “Greater Naples” all the way into distant Immokalee.
- direct people to trusted, local sources for legal immigration services.
- offer 7 ethnic ministries proclaiming Christ and serving the needs of His people over a 39 mile span in SW Florida. .
- equip 3 Hisp. deacons, 6 Hispan. deaconesses, and 2 Haitian Vicars in conjunction with our FL-GA District and our own Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.
- offer free English Classes 5x every week, Jan.- Thanksgiving, equipping thousands of new residents to overcome the “language barrier” and speak English every year.
- Offer TWO (2) separate one-week workshops with special help from our Partner Congregations in Peoria, IL and Knoxville, TN.
- Offer First Communion classes and Youth Confirmation classes three times every year.

The Lord blessed us to START....

- a Youth Group, which collaborates with three other congregations in our area.
- Deaconess care for members of our local Hispanic churches.
- Deaconess preparation classes for 11 women every Monday night in January '24.
- SW Florida’s first Hispanic Lion’s Club in August.
- A new “Five Year Plan” for 2025-29
- A new campaign for funding the mission in November.

Mr. Bill Allen, a member of our sister congregation, GRACE LC, Naples is officially helping to garner support from the local businesses, community partners, churches and our faithful, loving supporters from the past 8 years.

NEW FOR 2025:

- Implementation of a new “FIVE YEAR PLAN” for Mercy Ministries and Word & Sacrament Ministries. This Plan will carry us from 2025 – 2029.
- Partnering with POBLO outreach to Muslims in SW Florida (with Peace LC, Naples)
- Hosting an after-school tutoring program for elementary – high school students.
- Offer professional Spanish classes for area professionals who need to learn Spanish.
- Offer specific financial assistance to help our immigrant work force “make it” through a financially tight week or month.

(Without our help, THEIR hardship translates to YOUR hardship by means of canceled doctor’s appointments, postponed medical procedures, deliveries, and other important services that residents and citizens alike count on every day in the USA.)

- Support SIX (6) Spanish-speaking Deaconesses to begin serving in English and Spanish by 2027 at churches and schools from N. Fort Myers to Marco Island.

They will study through distance learning at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis’ EIT Deaconess Program, which will be 2 nights of classes from 8:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. live online.

DECEMBER 2023 – NOVEMBER 2024 IN PICTURES



Rev. Dr. Arthur Just teaches on his great book “Heaven on Earth” at the Pelican LC to our Spanish churches; the pastors & churchworkers of our SW Florida Circuit for our annual Epiphany Party.



Rev. Orlando Ramirez at the first meeting with 11 ladies from our local Spanish congregations, who were interested in becoming LCMS Deaconesses. Pastor Ramirez taught weekly classes on the Old Testament, New Testament, and Lutheran Doctrine from January through November 2024. We now have 6 women who are ready to enroll in the EILT Deaconess Program at *Concordia Seminary, St. Louis* for THIS January!



Our *POBLO* missionary to the *SW Florida Circuit* for Muslim outreach, Vicar Tim Abel, Samantha & their daughters; The men at *Pelican LC* on Father's Day; Painting the Sanctuary in spring '24.

Summer ESL (English) Workshops to immigrants in SW Florida



Grace LC, Knoxville came with 25 volunteers in June; In July, Redeemer LC, Peoria came with 20!! The Lord Jesus served at least 160 students each day (~65/morning classes & 100+/evening classes) !!!



We used every square inch of space in the sanctuary and in our buildings! Many study groups were literally "back to back" with another group.



Pastor Mark Eisold and Vicar Niclau Alcena welcome the morning students in both Spanish and Haitian Creole at the opening in the sanctuary. Dozens more arrived after each opening!



During our normal classes (5x/week) with 12 volunteers, we had to start a 'waiting list' as 100 students per event is our limit. With the additional volunteer teachers from Knoxville & Peoria and their creativity and flexibility, we accepted many more during each week of English Workshops (9x/week).

BAPTISMS, CONFIRMATION & FIRST COMMUNION



INSTALLATIONS & CHARTERING CONEXIÓN LUTHERAN CHURCH



Pastor Eisold, installed at Pelican LC in March; Rev. Orlando Ramirez was colloquized in June; President Rockey visited with *Conexión Church* in August, and it was received as a new LCMS congregation with Rev. Ramirez installed, ALL on October 20 - after a one-week "hurricane delay".

NEW Ministries in Action



Pelican LC is the home of SW Florida's first Hispanic Lion's Club!! Pictured: Founding members w/ officers; Pastor Eisold leads prayer prior to opening the Vision Clinic at *Pelican LC* on Oct. 26 (160 people were served that day!!); Our new Youth Group* at the District Youth Event in Orlando, FL.

* Special Thanks to Marco LC & their DCM, Betsy Sabbides for helping Marilyn get this started so well!