

Update from Vietnam

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lord is always with his church. Christians in the Hmong Fellowship Church in Vietnam are continuing to reach out to lost souls. In 2020, the Holy Spirit brought more than 12,000 Hmong people throughout Vietnam to faith in Jesus. The Hmong Fellowship Church has grown from 126,000 to 138,000 members.

Rev. Zang, one of the Hmong leaders, said, "Most of the pastors in the Hmong Fellowship Church have heard many scary things through television and radio about the impact of COVID-19, but they see it as less dangerous when compared to the lost souls who have no chance to hear the gospel before they die."

Rev. Fong and his evangelism team reached out to many villages in his area. The Lord blessed their efforts, and they were able to establish nine new mission congregations.

The Lord also has provided a way for WELS to continue training the Hmong Fellowship Church leaders. In November, the Vietnam mission team responded to the request of the Hmong Fellowship Church and offered Zoom training to 57 students. WELS provided phones and internet connectivity when needed to allow these students to participate in online training classes. Rev. Joel Nitz taught the gospel

of Mark, and Rev. Bounkeo Lor taught law and gospel. Instruction via Zoom is something new for the Hmong Fellowship Church, but the students were very excited. Some students even asked permission for their wives and parents to join the training as well.

While the Hmong Fellowship Church has been tremendously blessed, there are also some big challenges ahead. More than 1,360 leaders are waiting for someone to train them in the Word of God. They are also waiting to build more churches for new believers to worship their Lord. Lor explains that the Hmong Fellowship Church leaders are very skilled at doing evangelism in their communities. With proper training and materials, these men will continue to share God's Word.

The theological education center building project in Vietnam is still active but has been delayed due to COVID-19. Once Lor is able to visit Vietnam, he will arrange a Zoom or face-to-face meeting, if possible, between WELS and Vietnamese representatives. The government also wants to make this project happen as quickly as possible.

Lor shares that brothers and sisters in Vietnam send their greetings and say, "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!" to all WELS members. They appreciate your help and support, especially to train their leaders in the Word of God. They also ask for your continued support and prayers. ☩

TOGETHER



December 15, 2020

Mid-year graduation at Martin Luther College

Even though on-campus learning at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., has been interrupted for a time, we are happy to see that the work of the college to prepare young people for the public ministry continues. One visible reminder of that is the announcement that 22 students have completed their studies and have received their diplomas and graduated mid-year.

While most of those students will defer their assignment into the public ministry until next spring, several of them will be assigned to their field of labor when the Assignment Committee meets on Fri., Dec. 18.

Plans have been put in place to welcome students back to campus in January. In addition, President Richard Gurgel has announced that the governing board of Martin Luther College will be distributing an additional \$200,000 in financial assistance to help students who return for the second semester.

Even in difficult times, God's work—and his blessings—continue in our congregations and in our synod.

On behalf of all who work with you and for you in our synod's mission, have a blessed Christmas! ☩

Serving together with you in Christ,
WELS President Mark Schroeder



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