

WELS CONNECTION CLOSE-UP

April 2019



Neighbors reaching neighbors

“Our vision is to be a church that reflects our community, that is: **Many cultures, two languages, one mission.** What’s our mission? Simple. To **connect our community to Christ.**” This is the mission statement from Palabra de Vida Lutheran Church in Detroit, Mich.

And, with the help of members devoted to sharing Christ’s love with their neighbors, they are doing just that. Pastor Ryan Kolander shares a story about Ashley, who, amazed by Christ’s love, shared the saving message with her family and friends:

Ashley will be the first to tell you that she did not have an easy childhood. So when she heard about Jesus for the first time, about his love for sinners like her, she was all in. She went to church, witnessed in the streets, and memorized Scripture.

However, Ashley eventually lost that spark and entered what she calls her “slip and

slide” period with God. She started dating and eventually had a child. When her second was about to be born, she decided it was time to get them baptized. That’s when she came to Palabra de Vida. She got married, and by God’s grace, her husband, son, and daughter were all baptized. Then, Ashley started her mission.

In January 2017, she took me to her sister’s house where her nephew and two nieces were living. I got to teach them all about how Baptism is God’s way of adopting us into his family. Jeremy, whose parents are both dead and who has bounced around from home to home, perked up and asked with tears in his eyes, “So, I get to be in God’s family?” The three were baptized that month.

Then in December 2017, Ashley and her husband’s friend Jeffrey (upon insistence from Ashley) approached me about getting baptized. After pouring over the catechism, Jeffrey couldn’t believe how good God was and finally blurted

out in excitement, “Wait, so God saves me through Baptism? Wow! I gotta get baptized!” He was baptized in January 2018.

Jeffry and Ashley both started encouraging their friend and cousin Hollie to baptize her little daughter Kaelie. Kaelie was baptized in April 2018.

God worked through Ashley to bring eight people into his family, with more to come! Just look at this group of people (pictured on front with Ashley), nearly half of whom the Holy Spirit brought to faith through Ashley’s persistent gospel witness!

WHAT CAN I DO?

Find more inspiring mission stories at wels.net/missions and follow missions on Facebook at [fb.com/WELSMissions](https://www.facebook.com/WELSMissions).