

Lutheran Latino Ministries

Ministerios Latinos Luteranos

March 2021

Christ for all...
Cristo para todos

Farewell to a Champion: Remembering Ralph Petersen

by LLM President, Pam Bridgehouse

LLM's pioneer Ralph Petersen was called to his heavenly rest on Tuesday, February 23.

In the early 1990's Ralph, together with fellow Trinity-Oregon City member Ray Hannemann, initiated LCMS outreach among our Hispanic/Latino neighbors by sponsoring a Spanish-language radio broadcast in Woodburn, Oregon. They recruited representatives of several congregations and began raising funds to sponsor the programs, later providing recording equipment. Working with local missionaries, Polo and Marta Garcia over nearly 20 years, Ralph saw the need for missionaries to help expand the work.

In the mid-1990s Ralph initiated and encouraged Youth Servant Events in Woodburn to work in migrant camps.

In 1998 Ralph facilitated a two-day workshop training lay people to teach English as a Second Language as a way to initiate Christian outreach among our immigrant neighbors. As a result, ESL programs were started at Trinity and Ascension in Portland. Those ministries were the seeds of the Latino ministries in those congregations. He also organized a convocation to introduce Hispanic ministry to people in the North Willamette Valley and Portland/Vancouver areas. The event was attended by 98 people. The response encouraged Ralph to press LLM forward to develop the ministry.

About 1999, Ralph began working toward bringing on a team of missionaries. His vision inspired us to set goals of home Bible studies, followed by Spanish-language worship, and eventually training leaders to carry on the work of the church. He gave us our motto: "Christ for all – *Cristo para todos*". In 2002 God sent missionaries Miguel and Marta Luna to become members of Hope-Woodburn and in 2003 they were brought on as LLM's missionary team. Soon there were three congregations offering Spanish-language worship. Two of those congregations now have bilingual pastors. Ralph's vision has been further fulfilled in that, by God's help and guiding, we have accomplished colloquy for one pastor, Miguel Luna (now deceased) and provided seminary education for one deaconess, Marta Luna. Vicar Ruberto Ek Yah who came into the LCMS at Trinity-Portland will finish his pastoral studies in June, and Hana Laughton who grew up in the Latino ministries at Ascension-Portland, will begin her deaconess studies in the fall. Fifteen people are enrolled in Mission Training Center classes taught by Pr. Zabdi Lopez (Hope-Woodburn).

Over the past 30 years hundreds of people have heard the gospel and come to saving faith in Christ as a result of Ralph's initial efforts and constant support as a mentor, encourager, and financial donor. And of course, he kept the ministry covered in prayer.

Ralph is the one who got me involved in Latino ministries in about 1991. He was so proud and happy to see LLM's development along the way. Every time I told him of another positive step his face lit up with his broad and beaming smile as he said, "Terrific!" He will be greatly missed, but his legacy of charity, encouragement, and Christ for all, will continue. *Well done, good and faithful servant.*



Meet a New Member of Our Team



We are happy to introduce LLM's newest volunteer, **Tim Peterson**. Tim graduated from Concordia University, Portland, in 2010. He has worked in youth ministry and Latino ministry, and has valuable business experience. Tim will be helping us with fundraising and donor development.

A verse that guides Tim's life is 2 Corinthians 5:19-20:

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Tim says, "My time spent in Latino ministries and particularly LLM is a highlight in ministry for me. For three years, I taught the youth Bible study at Ascension (Portland). I took part in Latino ministry for three years through an ELCA congregation in Brush Prairie, WA.

(There might be a sermon I preached lurking around the internet somewhere.)

It was an honor working alongside Pastors Miguel Luna and Paul Gossman [at Ascension]

and by God's grace, strength, and the Holy Spirit's working, I think LLM is a very strong arm of the LCMS. I praise the Lord for Pam Bridgehouse and I'm thankful she wants me to be a part of this really cool ministry.

So, enough about me. Let's get to work! More people need to know Jesus! Amen?"

Amen! We welcome Tim's enthusiasm and energy and look forward to hearing more from Tim in the future.

Good News!

Friday February 26 we received the following message from **Colleen Ek**, wife of Vicar Ruberto Ek Yah who was diagnosed with breast cancer November 2019:

"Today signaled the end of my active [chemotherapy] treatment. Thank you for everything!"

Here is Colleen's facebook post from that day:

"Peace and love, friends. 🙌💕

Today is my last infusion and then I'm released to my own devices again. Thank you for sharing your love and support with me. Drop me an inspirational song, quote, scripture, meme, anything! I want to feel all the emotions today because I'm ALIVE!! Special thanks to my husband Ruberto Ek Yah who has stood by me through the good, the bad, the ugly, the bad and ugly again, and now hopefully more good! God has blessed me with a wonderful partner.

I'm leaping and hopping on a moonshadow."

Thank you to everyone who gave to the Ek Family Fund over the past 15 months. It has been a great help to the family. We give praise and thanks to God for bringing Colleen through her cancer treatment with such grace and faithfulness. We pray that she is completely healed.



Vicar Ruberto Will Finish Pastoral Studies in July

Vicar Ruberto Ek Yah preaches at both Spanish and English worship services and offers devotions during the week on facebook live. Also on facebook live he teaches a class in Lutheran Doctrine every Friday evening at 8:00 p.m. to people in his hometown in Yucatan. He will be finished with his studies in July and will be eligible for ordination. We are grateful to God for sustaining Vicar Ruberto, and to Zion Lutheran Endowment Fund (Portland) for grants that have paid the majority of his seminary fees. Thanks to all who have supported Vicar Ruberto throughout his education. We are all greatly blessed by this partnership.

Deaconess Marta: Serving Families, Opening New Fields

Fifty. That is the average number of families **Deaconess Marta Luna** serves in the name of Jesus every month. Personal visits, devotions and Bible studies, phone calls and text messages, rides to medical, legal, and immigration appointments, are some of the ways that Deaconess Marta shows the love and compassion of Jesus.

Sharing her wisdom...

In addition, Deaconess Marta and LLM President Pam Bridgehouse are working to produce a bilingual booklet, *Initiating and Maintaining Relationships for Evangelism*, a summary of practical wisdom Deaconess Marta has gained over her lifetime as a missionary evangelist.

Expanding the reach...

It seems that the Holy Spirit is opening doors to expand Deaconess Marta's ministry into Salem. She is beginning to help at Salem Free Clinic, intending to build relationships in Salem through working with community agencies. We are ready to reach out into neighborhoods to build God's kingdom and introduce people to Jesus. We appreciate Marta's initiative in exploring and pursuing opportunities to serve people in God's name and to His glory.

Grateful for grants...

Thanks to the Oregon District LWML for the \$6,500 grant that will cover about one and a half months of Deaconess Marta's missionary service. The grant is funded by mites so be sure to fill your mite box!

We are grateful also to the **Northwest District LCMS** for their annual \$6,000 grant that also provides about six weeks of ministry expenses.



Providing for the ministry – Cheerful Givers! (2 Corinthians 9:7b)

We thank God for all of the champions who support Deaconess Marta's life-giving, life-changing ministry and that of all LLM workers!

- A growing number of **monthly donors** help maintain a steady funding base. **Will you join them?**
- We are blessed with several **major donors** (\$1,000/year or more) who provide generous gifts to sustain the ministry and answer special needs. **Could you raise your support to become a major donor?**
- Thrivent members direct their **Choice Dollars** to Lutheran Latino Ministries. **Have you directed yours?**
- Retired champions send a portion of the Required Minimum Distribution (**RMD**) to LLM. **Have you considered sharing part of your RMD with us?** Ask your financial advisor how.
- Have you considered including LLM in **your will or estate plan?** Your financial advisor can help you direct part of your life insurance benefit or a portion of your estate to LLM.
- We can help you with your application for **Thrivent Action Team** seed money to help pay for newsletters or ministry materials.



Lutheran Latino Ministries is a Recognized Service Organization with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and a tax-exempt non-profit organization.

EIN Number: 38-367424

All officers are unpaid volunteers: President: Pam Bridgehouse Vice President: Sara Cardona Secretary: Hana Laughton Treasurer: Janet Ellis

Pastoral Advisor: Rev. Zabdi Lopez

Lutheran Latino Ministries

PO Box 293

Mt. Angel, OR 97262

<https://lutheranlatinoministries.org>

email: lutheranlatinoministries@gmail.com

Ministry Update
GIVING DAY MARCH 30

GIVING DAY IS MARCH 30!

Why March 30?

On that date in 2003 LLM's first Spanish-language worship service was celebrated at Hope Lutheran Church in Woodburn, Oregon.

**CELEBRATE 18 YEARS OF SPANISH WORSHIP,
OUTREACH, AND CHURCH LEADER TRAINING**

KICK OFF THE FUNDING FOR THE DEACONESS INTERN

with your gift of

\$18 – a dollar for every year

\$54 - in honor of three congregations

\$118 or any multiple of \$18!

"A gift opens the way..."

Proverbs 18:16a

Visit LLM's website and click on
the tab **GIVING DAY MARCH 30**
or mail your gift today!

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