



TINY CHURCH, BIG GOALS

With approximately 350 baptized members, two congregations, two new outreach ministry sites, multiple ministries and big dreams, “the Lutheran Church in Cambodia (LCC) is a young church that is on the verge of doubling its mission outreach with great zeal,” said Y. Franklin Ishida, ELCA global mission director for Asia and the Pacific.

Founded in 2010, the LCC is a product of the Lutheran Church in Singapore’s mission work—a denomination founded in partnership with the Lutheran Church in America, an ELCA predecessor. Although outside funding from the ELCA and the church in Singapore is still important for the young church, Daniel Orn, a founding pastor said the LCC aims to be self-sufficient by 2035.

In this mostly Buddhist country, however, growing the church through direct evangelism isn’t effective, Orn said. Instead, the church attracts people to the faith through the caring way its members live and through its holistic, innovative ministries. One such example is the LCC’s hostel project and congregation in Phnom Penh.

The hostel met a critical need for the LCC’s first congregation in Kruos Village, which had six

university students looking for affordable housing. By 2012 the hostel ministry had grown so much that the LCC was able to purchase three, three-story units.

Now the hostel has a congregation of 100 members aged 19 through 30 that represents 10 of Cambodia’s 25 provinces. Most are university students like Sareoun Chum, a young adult leader and hostel volunteer.

Chum appreciates that his church not only “works with the soul” but also focuses on serving the poor. One example of this is the LCC’s agriculture ministry, also started by the Kruos Village congregation, which educates people so they can grow produce in their gardens to eat and sell at the market. The ministry has helped the village become more food secure, Ishida said.

Aware of its roots as a mission start, the vibrant church is looking ahead to a time when it will engage in global mission work too. Orn said the LCC hopes “to send missionaries to serve to restore Christians in Europe in the next 20 to 30 years.”

Your Mission Support dollars are used by the ELCA churchwide organization to fund global ministry work, including the support of the Lutheran Church in Cambodia.