

The Greater Milwaukee Synod joins Salvadoran pastors in saying:

## No to violence, Yes to Life!

*¡No a la violencia, Sí a la vida!*

Wherever you look in the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod, you will find dedicated pastors passionately proclaiming God's word and leading the effort to promote and protect His creation.

### The Hardware Store

In the town of Batres in Usulután, three young men from Pastor Julio Chavez' ministry team worked with VMM missionaries to open an agro-ferreteria (farm supply store).



In a country with staggering underemployment, these college graduates have built a business from the ground up. First fruits go to the church, while compensation for the three has grown quickly from nothing to subsidized lunches, and hope remains high. The agro-ferreteria is one of those rare projects that serves as an inspiration and model for church-centered economic initiatives across the country, be they based in farm supplies or baked goods, with the goal of providing financial stability and sustainability to the church in El Salvador and its communities of faith.



### The Fight Against Hunger

In Nejapa, a refugee community with its roots in the Salvadoran civil war, we find Fe y Esperanza (Faith and Hope) Lutheran church. Here thrives an ecumenical project to develop self-sufficiency in food production, and to promote organic

growing techniques. Seeds and supplies are lent to local farmers who lack the means to begin the cycle on their own, jump-starting them on the path to sustainability. Pastor Santiago Rodriguez directs the program that, among other things, explores natural approaches to providing essential nutritional diversity to Salvadoran diets. A number of Salvadoran pastors have worked diligently to expand the pilot to other communities.

### Mission of Healing

Every February the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod, its pastors, and Salvadoran healthcare professionals work with volunteers from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and other parts of the United States in an ecumenical event that attends to the physical and spiritual well-being of many of El Salvador's poor. Salvadoran pastors contribute a significant amount of time and talent before, during, and after the mission which, in 2011, saw nearly 1,000 Salvadorans take advantage of medical and spiritual resources, workshops, and medical supplies. In part through a partnership with the Salvadoran health ministry, the mission is expected to expand into more remote parts of the county in the future.



### Proclaiming God's Word

In the midst of the ongoing challenges of poverty, hunger, and violence, Salvadoran pastors like Pastor Blanca Irma Rodriguez bring the good news of Jesus Christ to their communities. She advocates passionately for social justice, and

has worked diligently to rebuild the congregations in Jayaque and Dos de Mayo in the face of the fear and uncertainty that set in following the assassination of the pastors there in 2006, fears that persist to this day. Meanwhile, she does all she can to help her children complete their university studies, despite economic issues that have directly impacted her entire family.

Lutheran pastors in El Salvador receive little or no compensation for their efforts, and because the Lutheran Church there serves the poorest of the poor in a very poor country, economic self-sufficiency will not come soon from within. The ELCA has established the **El Salvador Pastor's Endowment Fund** in order to one day provide a sustainable source of income for Salvadoran pastors. To find out more about this important fund and how you can make a difference, visit [www.partnerswithelsalvador.org](http://www.partnerswithelsalvador.org) or call the foundation at 800-638-3522, ext 2970.