

**Iglesia Luterana Salvadorena
and Northwest Ohio Association
United Church of Christ
Covenant Agreement Renewal 2022**

Biblical Foundation:

“I pray that according to the riches of his Glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in all.

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.” *Ephesians 3:16-20 4:1-6, 15-16*

Theological Reflection:

The passage above offers a compelling framework for understanding the relationship between the **Iglesia Luterana Salvadorena and the Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ**. In our partnership covenant, we remember that our faith is a spirit-driven gift of God which has allowed us to taste a love so compelling and so transforming that it changes everything about our lives. We acknowledge that the partnership is not so much something we are creating, but rather something to which we are responding that has its origins in the creative movement of God.

This movement of God's spirit, not only rests upon us as a gift, but calls us forth into a larger body of relationships stretching far beyond our own immediate circumstances, we are invited by God to discover what the Body of Christ looks like from God's view of the whole human family, particularly as that family is found in **El Salvador and Ohio**.

However, we are invited to more than just passive observation. We are called to active engagement with the wider church, growing ways which strengthen the ligaments of Christ's body between the **Northwest Ohio Association and the Iglesia Luterana Salvadorena**.

Partnership is the ligament connecting our lives together in response to the movement of the Spirit of God. As such, we recognize that no one part of the body is more important than another. Each part brings gifts to the table of celebration which can mutually strengthen each church's witness to Christ and God's vision.

We especially remember that in all our shared life, we are claimed by God to live a life of unity marked by faith, humility, gentleness, patience and love. These spiritual gifts are essential to the health of the Body of Christ and to the health of the partnership we embrace between the people of the **Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ and the people of the Iglesia Luterana Salvadorena**.

Covenant Agreement

Seeking to lead a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, the churches of the **Northwest Ohio Association and the churches of the Iglesia Luterana Salvadoreña** covenant together in partnership until either party terminates agreement:

- **Pray** for each other's churches and ministries.
- **Listen** with open hearts to each other regarding the joys and challenges of ministry and life.
- **Learn** about each other's countries, churches, and life situations.
- **Develop** lasting friendships through e-mail correspondence and visits to each other's countries and churches.
- **Coordinate** the sharing of resources and people between our two churches.
- **Celebrate** the richness of our diverse traditions by engaging in worship which uses liturgies, music, and resources of each other's worship life.

Strengths and Weaknesses Statement

Recognizing that healthy relationships rely on an honest assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses, we name that we are a church with growing edges in need of development and refinement. Often we find that we are a people of affluence driven by a myth of scarcity. Our view of the world is often informed by self-interest which lacks a global perspective. We are aware that there is much which our church can learn about reconciliation and hospitality from our sisters and brothers in the **Iglesia Luterana Salvadorena**. We are hopeful that our partnership can help us learn how to overcome the polarization which so often rules the conversations of our larger culture in the United States. We are excited about how different expressions of spirituality may enrich our lives.

We are also excited to discover how God may use the gifts which we bring to the table of partnership. In particular, we celebrate the gift of openness which God is nurturing in our life, readying us for this new relationship. While financial resources for support of special projects will likely be a part of lived relationship, it is our desire that these would be shared in a way which honors the mutual nature of our relationship.

As it is written in the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith, "God bestows upon us God's Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races."

Iglesia Luterana Salvadorena
El Salvador CA

_____ **Date:** _____
Reverendo Medardo Gomez, Obispo

Northwest Ohio Association USA
United Church of Christ

_____ **Date:** _____
Reverend Daniel Busch, Bishop