

Cristo Palabra De Vida

Cristo Palabra de Vida at St. Paul the Apostle in Detroit, Michigan is an example of how ELPW's English Conversation Outreach (ECO) model can help a congregation serve its community and welcome new members from another culture into its fold.

In 2007, three Michigan pastors brought 20 members for training to Gethsemane's English Language Outreach (ELO) program.

Their original intention was to call one pastor to serve the immigrants of several Detroit-area churches where there would also be small English programs. The WELS Model Program director, Beth Thompson, encouraged the pastors to concentrate efforts on one church in a changing neighborhood and call a full-time pastor for that particular group of immigrants. The outlying congregations could send their volunteers into the city to help the church start a volunteer-based ECO program.

The three pastors formed a consortium of congregations that raised funds for a full-time Spanish-speaking pastor at Paul the Apostle in Detroit. Pastor Dan Schmidt (who had been a volunteer at Gethsemane when he was a seminary student) was installed in June 2008 as the church's second pastor who would devote his full time to serving the Latinos.

The consortium also raised funds for Paul the Apostle to hire two volunteer managers/lead teachers for the ECO program. They were sent to Gethsemane in September 2008 for the training seminar and to "job shadow" the directors at Gethsemane.

The Detroit ECO program started at Paul the Apostle in October 2008 with 25 volunteers from 10 Detroit-area churches. Sixty students were signed up on the waiting list. By December 2009, over 100 students had been served by 45 tutors (many of whom drove one hour one-way to this central city congregation). One year after classes began, 20 Latinos were regularly attending Spanish-language Sunday services in a church that previously had no connections with this population.

In 2013, the program continues to operate under Andrea Schmidt. Cristo Palabra de Vida conducts three ECO sessions a year with 20 to 30 adult students (plus around 10 children) and 16 tutors per session. Volunteers come from 12 area congregations and Heron Huron Valley Lutheran High School.

For more information on Paul the Apostle:

[Kingdom Workers Newsletter, 2010](#)

[Forward In Christ, December 2008](#)

[WELS Connection, June 2009](#)

When doing her field research for her MATESL thesis, Beth Cordes Thompson discovered the [Freirean literacy training method](#) and used it with her Latina research participant, who did not read or write in any language. This approach became the keystone behind her teaching philosophy and was illustrated in Spanish Literacy Outreach Program at the WELS Model ESL Program. Co-director Elizabeth Pizano developed masterful teaching materials. [[See the history slideshow.](#)]

When he was a seminary student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Pastor Dan Schmidt volunteered at the WELS Model ESL Program and worked with Elizabeth on Spanish Literacy Outreach. Because of his excellent Spanish skills and his ability to personally connect with our Spanish Literacy Students, he was engaged by Multi-Language Publications to write [a Bible class series](#) for Latino adults who are learning to read in Spanish as their first language.

For more information, read these MLP newsletters:

[June 2006](#)

[September 2006](#) [Note: Beth Thompson and Pastor Dan Schmidt were working at Gethsemane Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, not St. Peter's.]

The WELS Model ESL Program provided opportunities for future WELS pastors to be involved in ministry-related field experiences while attending Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

WLS Students' Participation at Gethsemane's English Language Outreach Program

2012

Schmiege, Caleb	
Kolander, Ryan	
Peter Janke	Employee

2003-2011

Barthel, Tom	
Bergemann, Scott	
Bondow, Daniel	
Bourman, Tim	
Bowe, Paul <u>MLC -1</u>	
Cherney, Ethan	Employee
Cherney, Isaac	Employee
Cortright, Ryan	
Degner, Abe	Employee
Degner, Sam	Senior Vicar
Dowling, Keegan	Employee
Ewald, Andrew	
Chris Ewings	Employee
Fritz, Paul	
Gawal, Adam	
Gurgel, Phil	
Hagen, Peter	
Hanson, Josh	
Heuer, Preston	
Johnston, Andrew	
Koepke, Mike	
Kuehl, Stephen	
Lange, Doug	
Meyer, Andrew	
Micheel, Paul	
Nass, Nathan	
Novotny, Mike	Senior Vicar
Olson, Dan (NYC)	
Raasch, John	
Retberg, Andrew	Senior Vicar 2003

Sadler, Ben
Scharf, Nate
Schmiel, Stephen
Schmitzer, Silas
Sigrest, David
Strackbein, Thomas
Walther, Peter
Wrobel, Brian
Zak, Ben
Zastrow, Nathan
Zell, Joseph

Assisted with Ethnographic interviewing in November 2003 as preparation for the WELS Model ESL Program's first module:

Johnston, Andrew
Lindner, Dan
Salinas, David
Schmidt, Dan

Volunteer for Spanish literacy program in 2006; engaged by Multi-Lingual Publications to write Spanish-language Bible class series for Latinos with low reading skills.

Schmidt, Dan