

## Will you join us in prayer?

Please pray for the continuing fruitfulness of the EFL program as it draws prospects toward their Savior, Jesus Christ. And please pray for Vicar Ruz, as he considers his call to Linares. Finally, pray that the new chapel may be a place where many people gather together around God's Word and sacraments!

## Would you like to help?

You can contribute to the big surprise for the small church in Linares.

Remember, for the first \$5000, gifts made to help with this project will be doubled!

Contributions toward the chapel construction in Linares may be sent to Mission News & Helping Hands, 6 Browns Ct. Mankato, MN 56001.

*To donate please use the attached envelope or visit [els.org/donate](http://els.org/donate).*



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## MISSION NEWS & HELPING HANDS



Sharing the Gospel in South America and Asia

JANUARY 2017

## Big Surprise for a Small Church!



Church leader Ariel Arriagada, Linares, Chile

The congregation *Unidos por la Fe* (United in the Faith) in Linares, Chile is blessed with many ministry resources: bustling attendance . . . a financially self-sustaining English as a Foreign Language (EFL) program that brings 65 students from the community to the church every week . . . three Kingdom Worker volunteers who teach at nearby public schools, build relationships in the community, then invite new friends to church . . . three members enrolled in seminary courses . . . a community that is growing so fast there is housing shortage . . . and a location where local busses stop in front of the church. But two elements are missing.

First, there is no full-time pastor. So the congregation recently called Vicar Guillermo Ruz to serve as their pastor. Currently finishing his seminary studies and vicarage in Santiago, Guillermo is a second-career, bi-vocational pastor who supports himself as a pipe-fitter.



*Vicar Guillermo Ruz is Called to serve in Linares*

Second, worship space is limited. The congregation currently worships in a remodeled home with a seating capacity of 18 so the 35 active members are crowded! Therefore, the congregation decided to build a new chapel and use the existing building for classroom and fellowship space.

They didn't know they were in for a surprise, but they did know this new chapel will be a blessing: the seating capacity will be 80 . . . now there will be an inviting place of worship for members and guests . . . the English program can expand . . . a bell tower will be constructed to clearly identify the church in the community.



*Christmas morning in the unfinished church*



*Exterior construction is nearing completion*

Where can the small congregation find resources for the project? Congregational offerings have been raised and saved . . . Ariel Arriagada is donating welding labor and discounted materials . . . the EFL program has contributed . . . Cross-stitch, the network of ELS Women's Mission Societies helped . . . Pinewood Lutheran Church in Burlington, MA designated part of an estate received for the project . . . and other donors have contributed. But \$10,000 is needed to complete the chapel.

Then came a big surprise! An ELS member presented a \$5,000 matching grant challenge for funding the new chapel at Linares. This provides each of us an opportunity to double the impact of our gift.

Construction is underway. The foundation was poured in late October. Steel framing was erected and the roof was added. Now walls will be constructed. The congregation joyfully held its first worship service on Christmas Day in the unfinished building.

May God bless the construction project in Linares, and our efforts to help build a new church!

*Rev. Matthew Behmer  
Bell Gardens, CA*