

# A new church in Switzerland

By Pastor Craig Johnson

**T**he congregation I serve was founded in 1890 by Norwegian immigrants who came to Astoria, Ore., mostly because they heard about job opportunities in the fishing and logging industry. Worship services were in Norwegian for the first 30-some years of the congregation. The immigrants faced challenges and had much to learn as they adapted to their new country. Over time, and in spite of the warning from one church member that “No good will come of this,” the congregation decided to conduct worship services and Bible studies in English in order to reach out to their community.

It is now 125 years later, but a similar immigrant experience is happening in Switzerland. Among the thousands of Brazilians who have migrated to Geneva for work opportunities are some from the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations in Brazil. As a result, a new congregation has begun in Geneva, pastored by Lay Pastor Augusto Fiuri, whose family has a long history of involvement in Free Lutheran churches in Brazil.

In January I traveled with AFLC missionaries Paul and Becky Abel to Geneva to teach and encourage the new congregation. We taught on topics such as the basics of Lutheranism, salvation through grace alone, and the background and principles of the AFLC.

The congregation presently rents space in a building near the center of Geneva. Their current meeting place is available on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. At other times they get together in homes. The cost of living in Geneva is quite high and rental space is at a premium.

Along with serving the congregation, Pastor Fiuri works a full-time job; he is married and the father to four children, all of whom are in school and living at home.

French is the language spoken in Geneva. It is the language the young people are learning in school and the adults are learning at their workplace. The congregation’s services are presently in Portuguese, but some singing is already being done in French. The vision for the future is to make the transition to



French in order to reach more people in Geneva for Christ.

Geneva is famous in Reformation history as a place where John Calvin did much of his teaching. It is now home to an interesting museum about the Reformation as well as statues of some of the reformers. The good news of Jesus that the reformers proclaimed is now unknown to many in Geneva. The news wasn’t passed down through all the generations, and it needs to be declared again. Pray for God’s help and guidance for the new congregation as they seek to spread the good news. And pray for members of the AFLC World Missions



Pictured (above, from left) are pastors Paul Abel, Augusto Fiuri, and Craig Johnson.

TOP: Geneva, Switzerland, is home to a new AFLC church.

Committee and for AFLC Brazil as they seek direction from the Lord as to the best ways to help the new work.



Photo by Josh Wagner

## Raans leave for work in India

Kenyon congregation hosts sending service on Jan. 31

Members of Hauge Lutheran, Kenyon, Minn. hosted a sending service for AFLC Missionaries Brent and Emily Raan, who have been called to mission work in Chirala, India. The AFLC has long had an established work there, including congregations, a school, and an orphanage. The Raans are the first AFLC missionaries there.