



## Chicago Heights, IL

Pastor Ruben & Leah Sernas

### Greetings from El Pacto de Gracia (Covenant of Grace) Reformed Church in Chicago Heights, Illinois!

I pray that you, your family, and your church family are growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The last time I wrote for the Trumpet was in July 2020. I never would have imagined that we would still be dealing with the Corona virus more than a year later. Throughout this pandemic, our Spanish ministry has been impacted in various ways: the location of our worship service, our greater internet presence, and our face-to-face evangelism efforts.

Since May of 2020, we have had in person corporate worship continuously. However, in terms of our worship location, we have worshiped at different locations. We have not been allowed to worship at the First Presbyterian Church in Chicago Heights since March of 2020. Prior to Covid, El Pacto had used this facility for several years. Currently, our worship service is held at Dyer Presbyterian Church. After our service, we have fellowship time then Sunday School for all age groups.

Prior to the pandemic, we did not have a strong internet presence. However, once the shutdowns started, we were limited to the internet for several months. As a result, we needed to improve our online presence. We began a YouTube channel which features our worship service videos, adult Sunday School classes and English classes. The name of our [YouTube channel](#) is El Pacto de Gracia Chicago Heights. In addition, our website received a much-needed facelift. It had not been updated for over seven years. Not only does it contain more information regarding our



Dyer Presbyterian Church

worship service, our beliefs and our outreach efforts, but the content is presented both in English and Spanish ([elpactodegracia.org](http://elpactodegracia.org)). Every week I post on our [Facebook page](#) (*Iglesia Reformada El Pacto de Gracia*) as well as upload my sermons and

adult Sunday School class audio recordings on [SermonAudio](#) (El Pacto de Gracia Chicago Heights, Illinois).

In terms of our face-to-face evangelism efforts, we were able to have a community dinner at Jirtle Park which is located in an Hispanic neighborhood. It has been two years since our last community dinner. Covid restrictions made it impossible to host one during the summer of 2020. On July 31, 2021 we are grateful for the good turnout, good food, good weather and good fellowship. Almost everyone heard about our event through the mass mailer. The local residents remembered our event from two years ago. We saw some familiar faces. We also gave away Christian literature and T-shirts with El Pacto's contact information on them.

Please continue to pray for our evangelistic efforts. Please read the letter that was recently emailed to all of our churches which explain our short term and long terms goals. We greatly appreciate your prayerful and financial support. May the Lord bless the ministry of your home church throughout the year.

Blessings in Christ,

**Pastor Ruben Sernas**



Community Dinner



El Pacto July 2021



# MINTS International Seminary

Pastor Eric & Carla Pennings

## Raising a New Generation of Leaders

How does the church respond to changing times? The influence of twisted truth and phony philosophy is being embraced by churches around the world. How do we address the global challenge of the Covid pandemic? Over the past 19 months believers are becoming accustomed to watching church instead of engaging in communal worship. How do leaders set and implement a vision for the next generation, and the ones following? Discipleship and leadership development has always been the heart and soul of the growth of the church through the ages. How do we address the shortage of theological and biblical literature in many languages? Good theological reading from books is abundant in the Western world, but in developing countries there is a drought of books leading to a need for innovative ways of providing solid study materials.



These questions are what drive the ministry of MINTS daily in the preparation leaders for Christian ministry. MINTS has thousands of students in more than 15 languages, in over 75 countries around the world, representing all the continents. As the International Academic Dean, I have the task of overseeing biblical and academic standards through our training program of Global Theological Education. As I prepare diplomas and transcripts for hundreds of graduates, I have the privilege of praying for each of them one by one

as they use their training in the local churches and for the training of future leaders.

Many ask about how the COVID pandemic has impacted the ministry of MINTS globally. In remote areas, group restrictions have limited weekly class sessions. National professors have been restricted from traveling between regions. Restricted public transportation prevented students from making trips into the communities that offer the classes. Internet access for Zoom classes is limited in these remote regions. Some students have not been able to study throughout the pandemic.



In urban areas, God has provided an increase in the number of students because many are working remotely from their homes and have more time. Others have not been able to return to work and have capitalized on the extra time they have to advance more rapidly through the curriculum. The global pandemic has provided opportunity to focus more on training students to minister to those most impacted in their communities.

Prayer has been the focus for our MINTS leaders all around the world in the context of the questions presented at the beginning of this article. Our international team of leaders is expanding to include many national leaders who, through the Zoom platform are spending time in prayer for wisdom in their ministries.



International MINTS leaders gathered for a time of prayer

SAVE THE DATE!

# THE URCNA MISSIONS & PASTORS CONFERENCE

MARCH 14TH-18TH 2022, D.V.

We will return to the beautiful grounds of Bonclarken Conference Center in Flat Rock, NC to enjoy four days of fellowship, rest and learning together. More information to follow.