

**ORDINATION OF PASTOR JULIANA ALONSO**

*This past Sunday, February 26, Alicia and I were pleased to celebrate the ordination of Juliana Alonso to the pastoral ministry of the Mexican Lutheran Church. The ordination was held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church here in Mexico City, where Yuly had been working part-time since August 2020. The ordination was performed by Rev. Roberto Trejo, President of the Mexican Lutheran Church. The other pastors participating in the ceremony included Rev. Angela Trejo, Rev. Moisés Pérez, and Rev. Michael Busbey, who is the Regional Representative for Mexico and Central America of the ELCA Service and Justice Home Area.*



*Yuly began studying at the Baptist Seminary at the Theological Community of Mexico in 2010. Originally she came from a Pentecostal background. Shortly after her graduation in 2014, the Lutheran Seminary invited Yuly to help teach in our online program due to the many gifts and talents that were evident in her work. In 2018, Yuly also finished a Master's Degree in Biblical Studies at the Theological Community and began working more closely with the Seminary as one of our professors.*



*Yuly is the third woman pastor in a row to serve as pastor of the congregation, which is small but active. The previous two, María Elena Ortega and Karina García, were graduates of Augsburg Lutheran Seminary. Yuly is also the fifth woman pastor ordained by the Mexican Lutheran Church.*



*While the Mexican Lutheran Church had hoped to ordain Yuly a couple of years ago, the ceremony had been delayed in large part because of the Covid pandemic. Another reason for the delay, however, was that the parsonage next to the church had been under renovation. Yuly was finally able to move into the parsonage at the end of December. As a result, she will now be able to dedicate much more time to the activities and ministries that the congregation hopes to develop further with her full-time presence there.*

*It was recently announced that Yuly will also be working with the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program in Mexico City, which will be resuming this fall after being suspended when the pandemic hit in 2020. Her work with the program will allow it to relate more closely with the Mexican Lutheran Church as well as her own congregation.*

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*Invitations to preach or give presentations at your congregation online are always welcome!*

## REMEMBERING PASTOR PEPE

This past January 21, we received the sad news that Rev. Dr. José Ramón Alcántara had passed away suddenly here in Mexico City. The loss of Pastor Alcántara, whom we all knew as "Pepe," will be sorely felt among all in the Lutheran community here in Mexico.



Alicia and I first met Pepe in 1984, shortly after we had moved to Mexico City to begin working here. Pepe had recently returned to Mexico City with his family from Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, Canada, where he had completed a PhD in Romance Literature from the University of British Columbia and a Master's Degree in Theology from Regent College. Upon his return to Mexico, Pepe and his family became members at our congregation, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. He was also one of the founders of AMEXTRA, the Mexican Association of Rural and Urban Transformation, which continues to work in community development programs throughout Mexico today as a partner of the ELCA. While initially AMEXTRA intended to work primarily in rural areas, that changed with the devastating 1985 earthquake. Working closely with Pepe and AMEXTRA, we formed the Lutheran Aid Committee, which provided assistance to hundreds of victims of the earthquake and was involved in the reconstruction of over 150 homes in Mexico City for families affected by the quake.

Since 1983, Pepe had been Professor of Hispanic Literature at the Iberoamerican University. He continued in that position until his retirement, when he was named Professor Emeritus. Over the past four decades, Pepe also volunteered in numerous service organizations and was active in ecumenical and academic circles both in Mexico and in the U.S.

After teaching in several seminaries and theological schools here in Mexico City, Pepe began serving as a part-time professor at the Theological Community of Mexico in the early 1990's. He was also named President of the Administrative Community of the Theological Community and served in that position for over fifteen years.

Pepe played an important role in the reopening of Augsburg Lutheran Seminary in 1998, where he served part-time as professor. The last course he taught at the Seminary was the Theology of Creation, offered online during the Fall Semester last year.



In August of 2002, Pepe was ordained to serve as a member of the pastoral team at Good Shepherd. He served as head pastor from 2008-2015 and was instrumental in helping to form a number of future pastors during that time, including students not only from the Lutheran Seminary and the Theological Community but also from the ELCA Horizon Intern program.

Needless to say, Pepe will be greatly missed by all who knew him in his various roles as professor, pastor, administrator, mentor, and friend. The seeds he sowed in countless people and places during his years of service and ministry will undoubtedly continue to bear much fruit for many decades to come.

