Seine Bight, a coastal village in southern Belize with a population of over 1,200 people, struggles with poverty, a high unemployment rate, young single motherhood, and a literacy rate of only 79 percent. The country of Belize, along with this village, hosts a variety of religious influences, many of which are misunderstood and combined by the people. Christ Lutheran Church, located in Seine Bight, is the first Lutheran church in Belize, and was founded in 2019 by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and Belize Mission Society.

Belize Mission Society (BMS), a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS, began in 2003 with seven volunteers on a short-term mission trip providing Vacation Bible School (VBS) to 180 children. The mission has expanded over the years, with construction projects, dental and medical clinics, adult and youth Bible studies, sports programs, an education tutor program, scholarship programs, and an elementary school lunch program.

In 2009, it was noted that many of the students at the village’s school did not have food for lunch. BMS worked with a local resident to begin feeding 30 students in her home, resulting in a program called “Food for Thought”. Teachers noticed an improvement in students’ test scores and increased attention in class. As BMS contributions increased, an empty classroom was turned into a kitchen and lunchroom for 60–65 students, 20 percent of the school’s enrollment. A larger space is needed to provide food to more children.

Currently, the BMS dental clinic is in the multi-purpose building in the village. The multi-purpose building also holds mission team supplies, such as VBS supplies, dental and physical therapy equipment, and construction equipment. The contract with the village to use the multi-purpose building expires in 2024 and the village does not wish to renew it.

This mission grant will allow the building of a Mercy House on property located next to Christ Lutheran Church and the village school. It will be run by BMS in cooperation with Christ Lutheran Church. The Belize Lutheran Campus will be a focal point for tutoring children, VBS activities, adult Bible studies, medical and dental services, serving meals to students, sharing the Gospel of Jesus, and supporting short-term mission team activities.

And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him — a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12). By building Mercy House next to the church, relationship building of the BMS with local residents will provide a tangible connection to Christ Lutheran Church. By caring for the physical needs of the people of Seine Bight, missionaries will be able to share the saving relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Learn more about this mission grant at lwml.org/mission-grants