

Get to know the Rev. Charlie Holt, Part 2: Teaching Experience and English as a Second Language Program (ESL)



The Rev. Charlie Holt's ministry since moving to Houston four years ago has focused on developing a world-class teaching center at St. John the Divine. The teaching center has built a deep bench of lay teachers who effectively communicate the gospel with Biblical and theological rigor. It has also developed young adults to teach and lead a vibrant young adult group that now reaches nearly 100 young adults each week.

One of the more notable aspects within the teaching center fostered by Father Charlie is the "English as a Second Language" (ESL) program. A lay minister at the church, Barbara Foxhall, answered God's call to begin this program a few years ago, with Father Charlie's support, to assist the large immigrant population in Houston.



The Rev. Charlie Holt Posing with ESL Students at Walk for Cancer Awareness

The classes are offered at lower-intermediate, upper-intermediate, and advanced levels to help all individuals learn English for work, study and social interactions. It also provides students with extracurricular programming such as field trips, culture and history lessons, potlucks, family activities and group conversations on any topic imaginable. As fellowship is built, students and volunteers often organize additional events to support one another - most notably, students from Japan recently organized an event for students to create blue and yellow origami birds to support their peers from Ukraine.



Mural and Origami Birds from ESL Student Showing Support for Ukraine



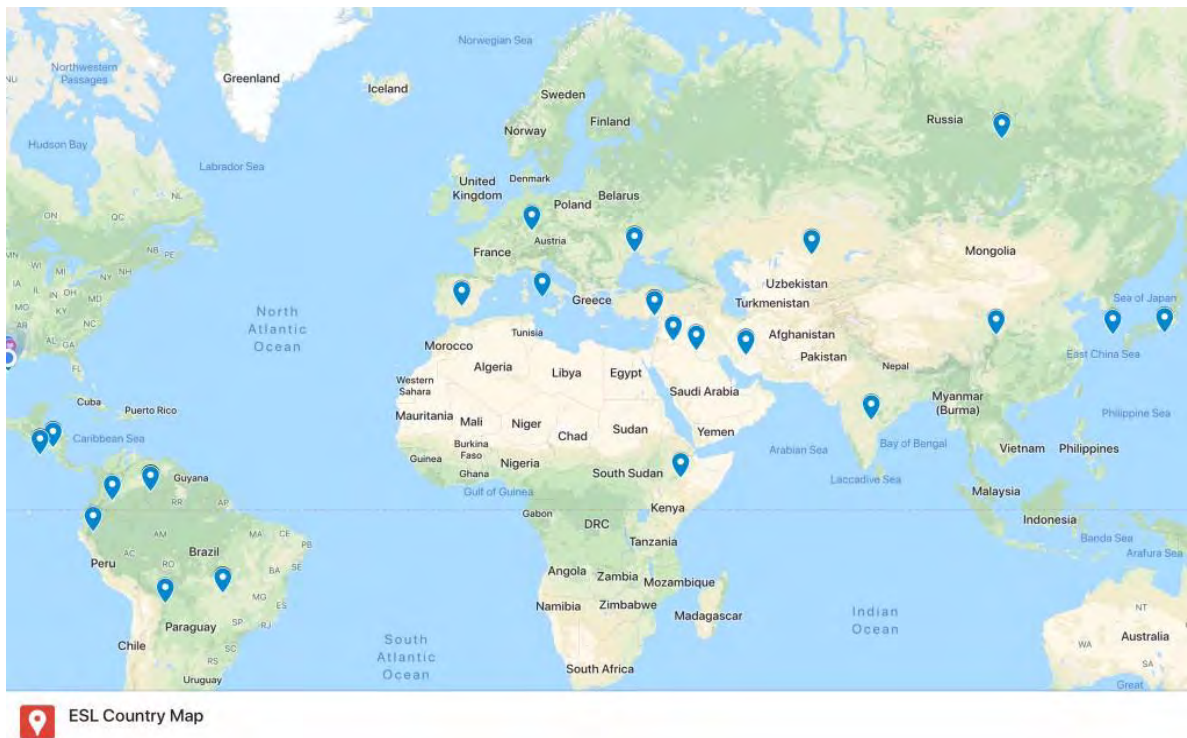
ESL Thanksgiving Potluck



ESL Field Trip to Local Art Museum

Through these activities, students not only improve their English speaking, listening and writing, but also build fellowship and learn about one another's cultures and perspectives.

There have been up to 150 students at a time who come to St. John the Divine church for the ESL program, with more than 44 countries and 33 languages represented. About 50 lay volunteers support ESL on a regular basis, which meets multiple times a week.



Sample Map of ESL Student Native Countries

While not forced on them, many students grow curious in learning about Christianity, join the church and often give their life to the Lord. Just in the last three years, the program has seen many adult baptisms of new members from countries such as China, Russia, Japan, and Turkey.



Baptism of ESL Chinese Student and Her Daughter



Baptism of ESL Student from Turkey

As the new Bishop-Conductor elect for the Diocese of Florida, Father Charlie will apply his ministry and teaching experience in several ways reflecting on God's call and listening to the heart and members of the diocese. Through these conversations, he hopes to bring programming that will deliver the most impact in our community's areas of need.



ESL Graduates Receiving Certificates of Completion



Student Fellowship in Homes



**The Rev. Charlie Holt
Leading ESL Bible Study**