

ABCUSA MATTHEW 25 GRANT APPLICATION
REQUEST FOR A GRANT

Date Submitted: February 28, 2016

1. General Information

Church: Lowell International Church

Region Affiliation with ABCUSA: Merrimac Valley Association of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

Ministry or Group receiving these funds: **LIC Pastoral Support for Refugee Ministry**

Mailing Address: Lowell International Church
60 Hasting Street, Lowell. MA 01851

Contact Phone: 617-780-0508

Contact Person: Rev. Ko Ko Lay

Tax Identification Number: 001071633

Email: kokolaymai@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/lowellinternationalchurch/>

Title: Pastor, Lowell International Church

Print Name: Rev. Ko Ko Lay

2. Mission Statement.

“My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Mark 11:17)

Lowell International Church (LIC) was started on May 29, 2011 as a house of worship for refugees from all nationalities in Lowell. However most of the church members are from various ethnic groups from Burma. Since early 2000's there has been influx of refugees from Burma in Lowell. Incidentally, many these refugees were Baptist Christians. These different ethnic groups from Burma speak different languages and possess different cultures and worldviews. Therefore, LIC was started as a multi-ethnic, multi-national church to reflect the microcosm of the Kingdom of God where there will be people from different nationalities. LIC uses the Burmese language for preaching and worship and all are welcome. The church membership is comprised of several ethnic groups including: Pwo Karen, Sgaw Karen, Shan, Kachin, Chin, Karenni and Bwe. The

average Sunday attendance is around 40. We have approximately 30 children from LIC that attend the Calvary Baptist Church Sunday School.

LIC Pastoral Support for Refugee Ministry:

For the last 5 years, LIC has not had a consistent pastor who lives in Lowell. For many years, Rev. Dr. Maung Maung Htwe, currently the pastor of Overseas Burmese Christian Fellowship (OBCF) in 30 Gordon St. Allston, MA 02134, have overseen the church. However, LIC is now fortunate to have Rev. Ko Ko Lay, theologically trained and an ordained minister from Burma that start working in the Church. Since, his arrival the church has been challenged to stretch the vision of becoming self-sustaining. The church attendance has increased over this period. For the first time, Rev. Ko Ko Lay has developed a church budget and has been encouraging church members to give and tithe to the church. The church members start giving in-kind donations to Rev. Lay's family, such as groceries, toiletries and clothing for his family, comprised of himself, a wife, and three children. Additionally, LIC is also providing rent for their pastor in the amount of \$1000 every month.

However, the church does not have any additional financial support from the memberships to do the very important mission work because most the members are refugees and do not have consistent income or a stable job. Yet, LIC needs someone like Rev. Lay to make the Church grow, both fiscally and spiritually.

These are some reasons why Lowell International Church is growing:

- Rev. Ko Ko Lay is accepted by all the Burmese ethnic groups, including the Muslim and Buddhist families, as their leader.
- In addition to pastoral work, Rev. Lay is very active in providing general refugee support. He helps the refugees with basic tasks such as: translating their mail, helping them with follow-up phone calls as a translator, and providing transporting and translation services for visits to various locations including doctor appointments, and other locations related to Social Security, Transitional Assistance, Food Stamps, and Health Insurance, pick up the children who attend the Sunday School and church.
- The greater Lowell Burmese Refugee Community, consisting of approximately 65 families.
- At least 130 people will receive direct help from Rev. Ko Ko Lay's work with the refugee community.

3. LIC's Mission Support for Refugee Ministry

- a. Mileage Reimbursement & Vehicle Care for
Refugee Work in Greater Lowell = \$ 2000
- b. Translation Honorarium to Rev. Lay for Refugee work = \$ 3000
- 4. With LIC's mission support for the refugee ministry, the refugees in Lowell, will be able to feel and taste the love and presence of God where they are, and the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- 5. Total Cost of the project: \$ 5000 (Five Thousand)
- 6. Amount being requested from the ABCUSA Matthew 25 Grant: \$ 5000 (Five Thousand)
- 7. Your other funding sources:
 - LIC support for the housing in a year = \$10800
 - LIC support for food, utilities and electrical bill, etc., = \$ 7200

I certify that all the information submitted with this application is true and correct, and we will use any granted funds as described. We will supply a 1- page report on the use of the funds and a photo within six months of receipt of the grant.

Application submitted by: Tar Taw Moo (Moderator)

Date: 02/28/16



Lowell International Church

60 Hastings St. Lowell, MA 01851

Pastor: Rev. Ko Ko Lay
Mobile: 617-780-0508

Email: kokolaymai@gmail.com

LIC Church Officers

Pastor	: Rev. Ko Ko Lay
Moderator	: Tar Taw Moo
Vice Moderator	: Naw Mirian
Secretary	: Hla Win
Vice Secretary	: Win Naing Oo
Treasurer	: James Thawngmung
Youth Director	: Ma Kay
Vice Youth Director	: Lily
Advisor	: Ardeth Thawngmung
Deacons	: James Shwe Ba, Tar Ko Oo, Ah Htang



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To whom it may concern

Greetings you from Lowell International Church!

LIC was started on May 29, 2011 as a place of worship for refugee communities in the city of Lowell. The Church is affiliated with the Merrimac Valley Association of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. The city of Lowell has become one of the most hospitable cities welcoming refugees from different parts of the world. The vision of the LIC is to realize the words of Christ: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." (Mark 11:17)

One of the greatest blessings for LIC has been calling Rev. Ko Ko Lay, who lives in the community, as our pastor. Rev. Ko Ko Lay and his wife, M Seng Mai are both theologically trained and passionate about revitalizing, envisioning the life of the Church.

The church is intentionally launching a new ministry initiative to help the refugees despite of their ethnicity and religious background. The church is being developed with newly arrive refugees, who do not have steady income or employment, or are often hired at or below minimum wage. Therefore, LIC lacks sufficient funds to its core mission, such as the tireless refugee advocacy and support provided by the church to the greater Burmese immigrant community. Despite these challenges, LIC members commit to provide a housing allowance and basic living in-kind donations to our pastor. Support from the ABCUSA Matthew 25 grant will allow us to augment this support.

We are requesting \$ 5000 for the LIC's mission for the refugees in Lowell.

Sincerely

Tar Taw Moo

Moderator



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