

Missing Pastor Found Murdered on Church Property

A Venezuelan pastor was found murdered Monday evening, Dec. 16, several days after being reported missing. He was 58 years old.

Rev. Luis Gregorio Coronado was pastor of Iglesia Luterana Fuente de Vida (Fountain of Life Lutheran Church) for more than 25 years in Puerto Ordaz. Iglesia Luterana Fuente de Vida was part of the Iglesia Luterana de Venezuela (ILV), which in English is the Lutheran Church of Venezuela.

Coronado went missing while traveling to visit members of his church on Thursday, Dec. 12, reports El Pitazo. But according to the official newspaper blog of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), Coronado went missing on Saturday, Dec. 14.

Coronado's body, which was already decomposing, was found in a building belonging to his church, according to El Pitazo. Authorities found Coronado with his hands and feet tied. Evidence at the crime scene included rope, a bottle of alcohol, cigarette butts and a candy wrapper.

Coronado's family says he never received threats and didn't have enemies.

"Luis was a gentle, faithful shepherd," says Rev. Ted Krey, LCMS regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean. "In fact, he was much like John the Baptist, always pointing others to Jesus and the firm hope of the Savior. I grieve him. I grieve for his dear wife and his son who is following him into the ministry.

"Luis now enjoys new life in Jesus. We grow stronger in our Advent hope of seeing our dear ones gathered around our living Lord Jesus."

According to the LCMS' official Twitter account, Coronado was the second-longest tenured pastor in the church.

"Please keep his family and the ILV in your prayers," The LCMS tweeted.

Coronado leaves behind a wife and three children.