

MINYS COMMITTEES



ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY ENABLER

Becca Seely and Marcia Parkinson-Harrison,

co-chairs

We seek to unify our synod in the wholeness of Christ by dismantling the walls of racism. We are all called to this mission together.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Eric Faret, Marret Arfsten,
David Parsons, Randy
Subramany, Marianne
Tomecek, Justin Johnson,
Joel Bumol, Ingrid
Compton, Marva Jenkins,
Samuel Silaban**

During the 2017-2018 program year, the Anti-Racism Committee has been very busy.

On Oct. 21, 2017, we held an Introduction to System Racism

workshop at Redeemer St. John's Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, and on March 24, 2018, held a similar training at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Smithtown. Both workshops were led by trainers Michael Russell and Lori White, from Crossroads. This summer, the Anti-Racism Committee will be hosting two additional anti-racism workshops focusing on Internalized Racism, one of which will be bilingual in Spanish and English and the other of which will be part of the annual Urban Leaders Institute.

Our Equipping Leaders Subcommittee has begun producing discussion guide resources for congregational use, which were piloted in congregations this spring and some of which are being shared more widely at this Synod Assembly for use across our synod. Please stop by the Anti-Racism display table for more information. Our Changing Synod Practices Group has been working closely with the synod's communications department to ensure that advocacy around racism and immigration issues are front and center in our synod's communications.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

"Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world." While the Anti-Racism Strategy Enabler is connected to the mission of the Sent Committee, our work connects to the entirety of the Strategic Plan. We believe that every human being, of every color and background, is claimed by God in Christ, that we are gathered together into communities that God is drawing together into repaired relationship, in spite of the sin of racism, and that we are sent forth into this world to actively repent of racism by dismantling the systems that perpetuate it.

BUILDING BRIDGES

We want to build bridges of connection, reparation, reconciliation and justice among people and tear down the

walls that divide us and keep us from oneness in Christ. We are seeking to help make our church not just a place where we say "all are welcome" but one in which we incarnate that welcome by dismantling the systemic barriers of racism that plague our church, community and country.

Immigration, in particular, is an important priority for the Anti-Racism Enabler. We know that racism comes in many forms, and that the oppression of immigrants in this country, particularly of non-white and/or non-English speaking immigrants, is a huge problem, now, more than ever. Along with Sent, we are seeking to educate our non-immigrant siblings in Christ about the challenges faced by immigrants in this country, and to empower them to work toward change and justice. We also are committed to developing leaders, including young leaders, who are trained and passionate about combating racism.

GET INVOLVED!

Congregations can use the resources we provide to run adult forums, workshops and discussions in their congregations, about racism and related topics.

We would welcome folks passionate about combatting racism to contact us about doing more intensive anti-racism training and supporting the work of our committee.

The Synod continues to offer the anti-racism workshops that are required of all rostered and lay leaders in the synod. If you haven't already attended one, please sign up as soon as possible for one of these valuable workshops.



CANDIDACY COMMITTEE

The Rev. J. Elise Brown, Ph.D., *chair*

The Mission of the Candidacy Committee is to shepherd candidates to ordained ministry through the Candidacy Process. We help candidates discern their call to ministry.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rev. Wilk Miller, Rev. Rosalind Braithwaite, Linda Upright Janet, Sir Madelyn Soussoudis, Ingrid Compton, Lee Welch

During 2018, we have had 25 candidates active in the Candidacy Process. These candidates come from a diversity of backgrounds and reflect the full diversity of leadership we hope to see throughout the ELCA in those serving in ministry. In addition to these 25 active candidates, 20 additional candidates began conversations about potentially entering the Candidacy Process at some future time. We build bridges by helping candidates discern their particular call to ministry, and consider various settings in which their gifts can be used to build bridges from congregation to community, congregation to congregation, and congregation to individuals. We also want to help build bridges between ordained rostered leaders, to help leaders understand the importance of collaboration and partnership to strengthen the overall mission of the ELCA.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

The overall mission of our Strategic Plan is to find new ways to strengthen the ministry of congregations and social ministries in the Metropolitan New York Synod. A critical aspect of this mission is leadership. Strong leaders are able to participate in the many elements of the Strategic Plan by being bold in their proclamation of the Gospel, and creative in finding ways to express this proclamation in a culture undergoing a significant shift regarding religiosity and religious expression. The Claimed, Called and Sent foci of the Strategic Plan are all central to the work of the Candidacy Committee. We work with persons who

feel called to ordained ministry, but we also help these potential leaders discern ways to help others, particularly those not called to ordained leadership, use their gifts to build up the Church and the ministry of Jesus in the world. All these elements are related to the Strategic Plan because each aspect requires strong leadership. We hope ordained leaders who have gone through the Candidacy Process in the Metropolitan New York Synod can be bridge builders and strong leaders for the Church and world.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Not only do we want our candidates to reflect the diversity of God's creation, we want our leaders to be able to be builders of welcoming, inclusive faith communities once they are ordained and serving out in the world. While it would be wonderful if such building came naturally and easily for everyone, we know building a welcoming and inclusive church is a learned skill. We look for candidates who are teachable, and who have a sincere desire to learn how to foster welcoming and inclusive faith communities within the ELCA. We want the Candidacy Process to be one in which candidates learn and grow in their ability to lead congregations that are welcoming and inclusive of all. Throughout the Candidacy Process, we want their experiences to show the gradual growth and strengthening of these missional commitments. Then, we pray their active service in the church and world reflect all they have learned, and continue to learn, as they live into their leadership as ordained ministers in the ELCA.

The specific area of leadership development relates to the work of the Candidacy Committee as discussed above.

GET INVOLVED!

Here are concrete ways to be involved in the work of the Candidacy Committee: 1. Pray for those candidates actively engaged in the Candidacy Process. 2. Be on the alert for potential candidates for ordained ministry in your congregation or other areas of your life, and encourage them to consider entering the Candidacy Process. 3. Stay in touch with any candidates you know are in the candidacy process, by encouraging them, praying for them and checking in with them, over time. 4. Support seminarians through scholarships, field work or internship opportunities in your congregation. 5. Speak with Rev. Jonathan Linman or Rev. Elise Brown if you have the name of someone you believe would be a good addition to the Candidacy Committee.



CHILD YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY NETWORK

Deacon Charlie Germain, *chair*

The Child Youth and Family Ministry (CYFM) Network works to have a grace-filled impact on children, youth, emerging adults, and families throughout.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Some of those who have participated with the CYFM Network in the past year include: Charlie Germain, Abby Triebel, Lisa McCaffrey, Margy Schmitt-Ajer

In the past year, we met with the new assistant to the bishop, having the responsibility for children, youth and family ministries, to discuss how our synod might enhance support of ministries to those in the first third of life. We met with synod staff and volunteers from other synods in Regions 7 & 8 at Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center in New Jersey on Oct. 22-24. We invited our synod staff to join us at the SYMBOL meeting (Synodical Youth Ministry Band Of Leaders) at the ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza held in Houston in Jan. 2018, giving them exposure to what other synods in the ELCA are doing. We also recommended a person to fill the role as synod day director for the upcoming ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston (June 27-July 1).

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

At the last Synod Assembly, the Called Committee, in one of their forums stated that their focus for the next year would be on ministries to people in the first third of life. In keeping with that commitment, the Child Youth and Family Ministry (CYFM) Network continued to administer programs they have supported and developed. These included:

1. Seeking nominations for the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit from Nov. 2 – 5. We sent two high school students and one adult to Houston for the event. It was attended by representatives from approximately 43 synods. Go to www.ELCAYMNET.org/YouthSummit for more information.
2. Scholarships for the ELCA Youth Ministry Extravaganza: We sought candidates and awarded two \$1 thousand scholarships at the Extravaganza. We also hosted a meal for those from MNYS attending the Extravaganza. For more information, go to www.ELCAYMNET.org/Extravaganza

BUILDING BRIDGES

The CYFM Network is committed to continually creating a vision that connects the generations. Last year, we encouraged former Bishop Rimbo to create a full-time position on the synod staff, for an assistant to the bishop for ministry to those in the first third of life. While our recommendations were not accepted at the time, we continue to advocate passionately for this staff position.

The CYFM Network has always encouraged training for adult leaders involved in the trenches of their work, and provided scholarships to the Extravaganza. The theme of Extravaganza 2018 was "Finding Forward." How do we, as a church, move forward in the 21st century? This doesn't mean maintaining the status quo. I would like to see even more emphasis placed on this in our strategic plan. Building Bridges across the generations is what "Finding Forward" is all about.

GET INVOLVED!

Individuals and congregations can engage in the work of the CYFM Network in part by taking advantage of some of the resources being made available. Two items mentioned above were the Youth Summit and Extravaganza scholarships.

What will the church of the 21st century look like? We need to be asking ourselves that question. Without a vision, we too often fall back into just trying to maintain the status quo. Too often, when we ask ourselves, "What should we do?," we don't include those in the first third of life in those conversations. We need to be in dialog with our young people. It may be that experiences at camps and retreat centers are much more important to them than what goes on in a local congregation. The church will always be there. The Holy Spirit will see to that. What form it takes may be very different from what we are used to.

I am always interested in your thoughts and comments. Please contact me and let me know what you think.



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Gerard A. Falco, chair

Working to educate churches and individuals on issues of environmental integrity and promoting specific action to promote greater environmental responsibility.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Pr. John Z. Flack, Pat Almonrode, Kristin Quell-Garguillo, Pr. James O'Hanlon, Pr. Aaron Baughman, Shay O'Reilly

In 2017, our committee made efforts to help ensure the implementation of the resolution passed by the 2016 Churchwide Assembly, calling for the ELCA to, among other things, respond to the Lutheran World Federation's call to review the Church's applicable social teaching and social responsibility policies and procedures, with the goal of not investing in and removing the largest fossil fuel companies from its portfolios, and investing in corporations that are taking positive steps toward a sustainable environment. We also worked to extend and deepen our contacts with similar committees and like-minded individuals in other synods.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

The Environmental Stewardship Committee is invested in assisting congregations and individuals develop best practices of waste reduction and energy savings, based upon sound sustainability principles. In assisting the ELCA, the synod, congregations and individuals to learn, implement and advocate for sound environmental practices, we claim our faith as Lutherans and as stewards of God's creation.

BUILDING BRIDGES

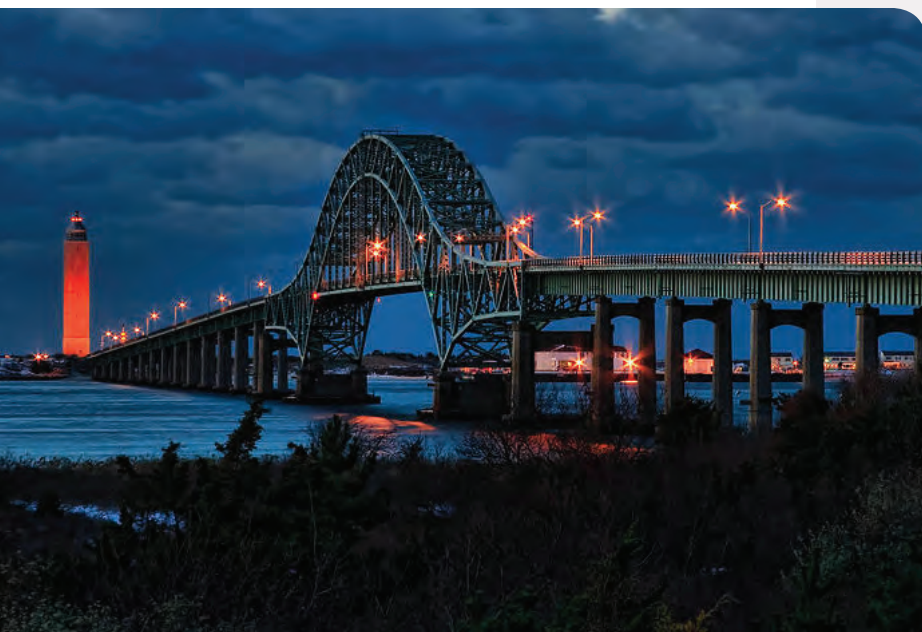
The Environmental Stewardship Committee takes on the task of helping Lutherans understand, from both a scientific and a spiritual standpoint, the threats to all of God's creation caused by our heedless use of this world's resources, including

especially our wanton use of fossil fuels. The very existential nature of these threats means they will require concerted, collective action on a global scale—this work must start with individual reformation, but it cannot end there. With this in mind, our committee is actively seeking ties with others doing similar work, within the worldwide Lutheran church and indeed within the faith community as a whole. To all those who believe that both science and faith must inform this work, we say welcome.

The Environmental Stewardship Committee continues to advocate for ecological justice, recognizing that those who are least responsible for polluting our global environment are often those who suffer first, and most, from the effects of that pollution. We must work to build bridges to those "frontline" communities—whether in Bangladesh, suffering from sea-level rise; in Port Arthur, Texas, where communities of color bear the worst effects of living near fossil-fuel processing facilities and other infrastructure; or here in Harlem, where diesel truck traffic contributes to rates of asthma that are abnormally high in the city. We also continue to build "bridges of awareness" with our synod's congregations, through educational and outreach efforts, to demonstrate how we can all play our part in the existential struggle before us.

GET INVOLVED!

Individuals and congregations are always welcome to contact us regarding resources to take appropriate steps to reduce energy consumption, minimize waste, save money and otherwise reduce their carbon footprint. Members of our committee stand ready to address congregations on environmental issues and to refer congregations to individuals with more in-depth knowledge of issues. On a larger scale, our committee played a major role in organizing churches and individuals from our synod, and other synods nationally, to participate in the 2014 People's Climate March, and in the formulation and passage of the divestment resolution at last year's Churchwide Assembly. Synod members are urged to connect with us and take part in all such activities.



HUNGER COMMITTEE

Dr. Robert Brent and Synod Deacon Karen Nurmi

co-chairs **The World Hunger Committee raises awareness about hunger issues and encourages congregations in ministries responding to the needs of hungry people locally and globally.**

METRO NEW YORK SYNOD



HUNGER COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Robert Brent, Synod Deacon Karen Nurmi, Pastor Percy Butiki – Synod Staff, Pastor Michael Poole, Mrs. Eleanore Sudbrock, Pastor James Sudbrock, Ms. Abby Triebel, Pastor James O’Hanlon, Pastor Alex Walbrodt, Pastor Rosalind Brathwaite, Pastor Anthony Stephens, Synod Deacon Richard Thyden

AS PART OF THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION, the committee spent a good part of 2017 focusing on “The Forgotten Luther: Reclaiming the Social-Economic Dimension of the Reformation” (Lutheran University Press, 2016). This book, which we heard about through the ELCA World Hunger staff, is a compilation of lectures given by Lutheran theologians and scholars at the Forgotten Luther Symposium in 2015. Luther’s prophetic call for socio-economic justice flows from his rediscovery that we are justified by grace through faith. Freed in Christ, we are free to love and serve our neighbor, which is the Reformation principle of faith active in love. The book was the focus of the Committee’s 2017 newsletter, “Bread and Justice,” and of the forum the committee led at the 2017 Synod Assembly.

THE COMMITTEE ALSO SOUGHT TO STRENGTHEN ITS CONNECTIONS WITH CONGREGATIONS within the synod by planning to host a gathering, “Sowing Seeds, Reaping the Harvest, Sharing Our Bread,” in the early fall for those interested in learning more about hunger issues, and in becoming congregational hunger contacts. These volunteers serve as a liaison between the committee and their congregations. Regrettably, despite publicity efforts, a Saturday meeting time, grant funding to host the event, a location convenient to public transportation, and a commitment from churchwide and synod presenters, registration was insufficient to hold this event.

RECENTLY, THE COMMITTEE BEGAN TO EXAMINE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN IMMIGRATION AND HUNGER.

After a decade of decline, global hunger is on the rise. Most of this is caused by violent conflicts and natural disasters, which disrupt food production and distribution. This can cause people to leave their homes and immigrate to other countries to rebuild lives. As a group, immigrants, both in our country and others,

are at a greater risk for hunger than the general population. Solutions lie in ways to make home country economies more adaptable and resilient to crises, and in increasing economic opportunities in host countries for those who immigrate. We intend to share more about this issue in an upcoming newsletter.

The committee also engaged in its charge from ELCA World Hunger to review and endorse applications from seven groups in the territory of the synod that applied for ELCA World Hunger Domestic Grants for the 2018-2019 cycle.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

The work of the Hunger Committee most closely aligns with the objective of the Sent component of the Strategic Plan, which is to respond to societal needs and issues through service, partnership, and advocacy. Hunger is a significant issue in the world and in the U.S. Globally, one in ten people in the world are challenged by chronic hunger, and in the U.S., 13% of Americans live in households that are food-insecure. Since the earth produces enough food to adequately feed everyone, hunger is primarily a justice issue. Food distribution programs address immediate needs, but not the root causes of hunger. This requires the partnership and support of organizations, such as ELCA World Hunger, that support sustainable development projects to lift people out of poverty. These include programs that provide agricultural development, access to education, job training, micro-loans, safe water, access to healthcare, etc.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The committee helps build bridges to our brothers and sisters in Christ by being a resource to help others learn more about global and domestic hunger, and to highlight ways they can engage in supporting solutions to this complex problem that burdens so many. God calls us all to feed the hungry, and doing so requires a multi-pronged approach of relief, sustainable development, education, and advocacy, in order that everyone will have a place at the table.

Keeping our synod’s current emphases in mind, the committee can speak to the relationship between immigration and hunger, globally and domestically, and invite others to work toward solutions that will deliver people from hunger to hope. An often-quoted passage at hunger leadership gatherings, Isaiah 58:9b-12, says it best, especially in verse 12 (emphasis added):

If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places,

and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

GET INVOLVED!

1. Designate someone in your congregation to serve as a liaison between the Hunger Committee and your congregation. No meetings are required, just a passion to end hunger and a willingness to share information from the committee with your congregation. Email the committee at **mnysworldhunger@optonline.net**, with your hunger liaison's name and contact information.
2. Arrange to show the committee's PowerPoint presentation, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat," available on the committee's page on the synod website.
3. Learn about and promote giving to ELCA World Hunger. Information and resources can be found at www.elca.org/hunger.
4. Get involved with a local food pantry or meal program.
5. Engage anti-hunger advocacy through Bread for the World's annual "Offering of Letters" at **www.bread.org**, and ELCA Advocacy at **www.elca.org/advocacy**.
6. Join the Hunger Committee! There is always room at the table! Contact us for more information at **mnysworldhunger@optonline.net**.



We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world – together. Working with Lutheran churches in the U.S. and around the world, ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to reach communities in need with innovative solutions that get at the root causes of hunger. Thank you for your prayers, your partnership and your gifts.

Give today.

ELCA World Hunger | P.O. Box 1809 | Merrifield, VA 22116-8009 | ELCA.org/hunger

INNOVATION TEAM

Faith Rowold, *chair*

The mission of the Innovation Team is to help plant and nourish bold, visionary ways to provide Word and Sacrament Ministries to those not currently served in our Synod.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Rev. Becca Seely, The Rev. Paul Walley

The most significant accomplishment of the Innovation Team during 2017 was an overhauling of our grantmaking processes, to become more fully aligned with the procedures of the synod. We overhauled the language on our website and application to make requirements clearer and created rubrics to help applicants with project applications. We are hopeful these changes will make the grant process smoother and faster, and improve communication. We also hope the number of applications we receive, proposing projects with a pathway to Word and Sacrament ministries, will increase. We reviewed six applications, and the synod approved two projects submitted in 2017. While overhauling processes does not necessarily sound “bold and visionary,” as our mission statement says, we have found that we cannot fulfill our mission or achieve our purpose without better mechanisms in place for funding innovative ministry projects, and so we are excited about these changes.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

As part of the Gathered Strategy, the Innovation Team is working to discover and nurture new ministry ideas in our synod that we hope will grow into innovative ministries of Word and Sacrament in the future. We do this not just for the future of the church, but for the sake of the world, as expressed in the Synod’s Strategic Plan mission statement.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The Innovation Team is fundamentally a bridge-building ministry because it seeks to support new ministries to people not currently being served by the Church in our area. We expect Sowers Projects to be welcoming and inclusive to all kinds of neighbors not currently engaged in church, and to help them reimagine what church can be—and how they can be part of it.

The Innovation Team builds bridges between the Lutheran church in Metro New York and the wider world of neighbors who currently are not connected to a faith community. These neighbors include immigrants, as we have recently funded the first stages of an immigrant welcome center in Brooklyn, and young people, as we have recently funded the development of a youth program to bring together Spanish and English-speaking youth in Manhattan.

GET INVOLVED!

We are actively seeking new members for this committee, which is an exciting place to serve and be a part of the new things God is doing in our area for the sake of the Gospel. We are also actively seeking applications from individuals and congregations for projects that are creative, will reach unchurched populations and have a long-term goal of creating a new Christian community.



TANZANIA COMPANIONSHIP COMMITTEE

To oversee the Metropolitan New York Synod's relationship with the North Western Diocese (NWD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT).

The Rev. Carol Fryer, chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Lois Rimbo, Rev. Perucy Butiku, Rev. John Krahn, Gayle Kliever, Stephanie Schmiege, Rich Ferolito, Camille Holman, Rev. Rosalind Brathwaite, Rev. Margay Whitlock, Judy Lorkowski, Margaret Wenger

The Tanzania Companionship Committee recruited and guided a new teacher for Kibeta English Medium Primary School (KEMPS) in Bukoba, Tanzania. Melanie Nelson began her two-year commitment to teach at KEMPS this year. Our committee was responsible for shepherding her through this process, including acquiring the appropriate visas and sending her to learn Kiswahili prior to teaching at KEMPS. We continue to keep in touch with Melanie and support her work in our companion synod.



Teacher Melanie Nelson supported by MNYS

Additionally, our committee is building bridges between MNYS and the North Western Diocese by linking some of our congregations with corresponding parishes in our companion diocese. This takes a considerable amount of coordination and communication. Twelve congregation-to-congregation partnerships are in various stages of development. We continue to support these partnerships as much as possible.

Representatives from MNYS and this committee visit our companion diocese and keep in touch often, in order to maintain and build on our ongoing relationships.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

The Tanzania Companionship Committee reflects the goals of the Claimed Strategy by our engagement with the Lutheran Tradition as it is manifested in the Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Confirmation Day at KEMPS



This mutual engagement enriches our people here in the MNYS and also our brothers and sisters in the North Western Diocese (NWD).

This committee also reflects the goals of the Sent Strategy, particularly through our partnership with our companion diocese, as well as our developing congregation-to-congregation relationships between MNYS congregations and NWD parishes. Through this committee, our synod supports Christian Education in the NWD. We have been supporting Kibeta English Medium Primary School (KEMPS) for many years now, including sending American teachers to teach the children there. We have raised funds to build classrooms and dormitories, to establish a computer lab and library, and to provide scholarships for students in need of financial aid. Our support has helped to make KEMPS one of the top primary schools in the Bukoba area.

BUILDING BRIDGES

This committee was created specifically for the purpose of building bridges between Christ's brothers and sisters of the Metropolitan New York Synod and the North Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. As companions in Christ, we welcome one another and work together as partners in the global body of Christ.

GET INVOLVED!

Any congregation that discerns a call to partner with a congregation in our companion diocese should contact any member of the Tanzania Companionship Committee.

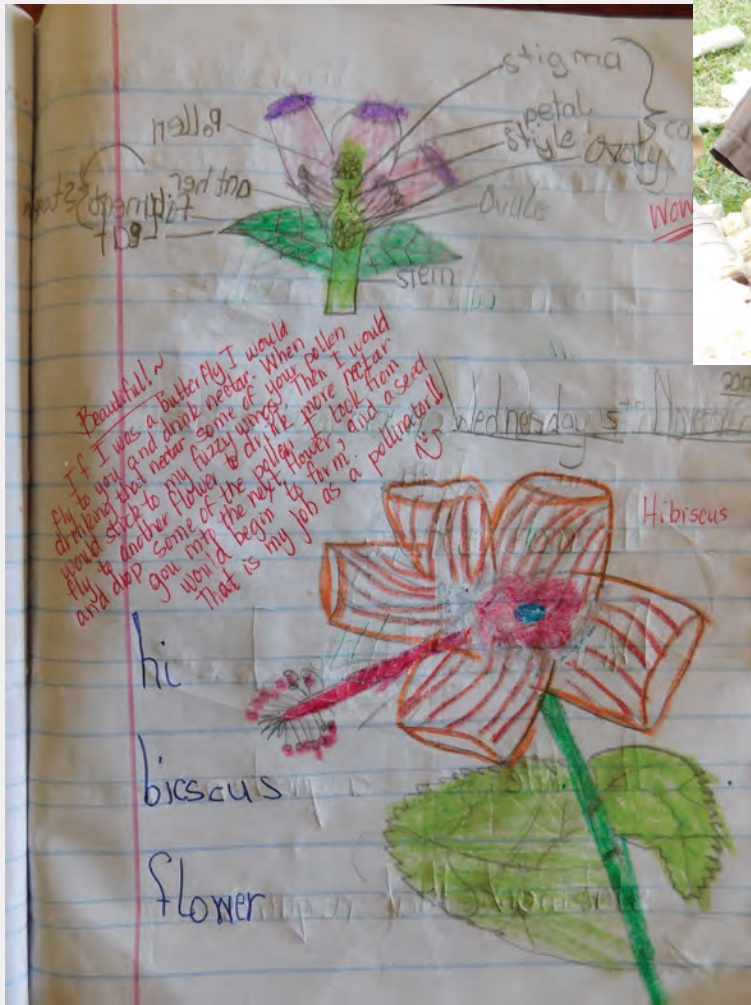
Congregations of the MNYS are encouraged to regularly pray for our companion diocese and for Melanie Nelson.

Congregations of the MNYS are also encouraged to participate in Udugu Sunday by lifting up our mutual companionship with the North Western Diocese and teaching their members about the ministries we share. This committee provides resources and ideas for Udugu Sunday celebrations on the MNYS website.

Congregations and individuals are invited to help support Christian Education in the NWD by sponsoring a student at KEMPS or contributing to the KEMPS scholarship fund.



Students at KEMPS with maize from the shamba



A student's work at KEMPS

*As companions
in Christ, we
welcome one
another and
work together
as partners in
the global body
of Christ.*