



Global Mission Updates



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Dear Friends of ELCA Global Mission,

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

Love is the essence of God, bestowed on humankind as God’s gift and purpose for the world. This one-syllable word is so overused in our daily lives that it has lost meaning. We love to go to the movies; we love to eat a certain type of food; we love this or that. However, God’s love is more than liking certain things. God’s love is the freeing and sustaining essence of our existence that pushes us into the world to live our lives as Christ did.

Douglas Hare, a New Testament scholar, **defines love as “stubborn, unwavering commitment.”** This is what we see in Jesus as he proclaimed the good news of God’s kingdom. People at the margins, struggling to survive, or not to die, found in him a source of sustenance, of healing, of inclusion. The apostle Paul encouraged Christian communities he served to live in that love, for “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). It is because of this “stubborn, unwavering commitment” that we “bear one another’s burdens.” We help each other, we support one another, we become Christ to the other, as Martin Luther taught us.

I am delighted to present to you this most recent edition of **Global Mission Updates** that has a new look and feel. **The program updates and companion highlights show the many ways the ELCA is touching people lives, and together, we are becoming Christ to one another.** In these pages I am also confident you will encounter a program, a friend or a companion leader who has touched you and made a difference in your life as well. That said, this update is really only a small snap-shot of our work with over 85 global companion churches in 94 countries.

Please be in touch and let us know how you are making use of **Global Mission Updates**. A special thank-you for your interest, your prayers and your support for this labor of love that continues throughout the world in God’s name.

Pax,



The Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica Padilla
Executive Director, ELCA Global Mission

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ELCA Global Mission Updates is a biannual collection of stories and insights that highlight the ministries of our global companions. This resource provides a platform for a diversity of voices and perspectives that seek to honor the unique context from which they come.

Asia Pacific

Asia is home to some of the newest Lutheran churches. Some of these have been birthed by mission outreach from churches in the region (e.g. Lutheran Church of Singapore helped bring about the Lutheran Church in Cambodia; See Spring 2018 report), while others have developed organically. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Himalayan States was organized in 2005 bringing together four smaller Lutheran churches that have emerged in the northeastern Indian states of Assam and Manipur. After several years of dialogue, the ELCA began formal relationships with two of these churches, the **Manipur Evangelical Lutheran Church** and the **Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church**. (The Assam Evangelical Lutheran Church already has a relationship with Germany, and the Eastern Evangelical Lutheran Church is undergoing internal realignment.)

July 15 will be marked on the calendars of these two churches as the date when their dreams of having an outside companion were fulfilled. In a three-day celebration of worship, dance, song and Bible study, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the churches. This will also be an opportunity for these churches, represented predominantly by the Zou and Bodo tribal groups (respectively), to find further voice in the global church scene.

Following the 2017 consultation in Thailand on **human trafficking**, plans are being formulated for further country-specific consultations in the Philippines and Cambodia. And though focused on specific countries, the networking that emerges will spawn further conversation throughout the region. This is



Bodo women dance at the Memorandum of Understanding signing celebration. (Photo: Franklin Ishida)



Director for Asia and the Pacific Franklin Ishida stands with BELC Bishop Ichahak Muchahari.

Cox Bazar in Bangladesh has now become one of the largest refugee camps in the world. Ethnic cleansing and violence in Rakhine State, Myanmar, has driven some 700,000 Rohingya across the border into Bangladesh. (Photo: Chandran Paul Martin)

part of wider considerations on migration, which also includes concerns about refugees, with the **Rohingya** crisis is a major concern. The Rohingya situation is changing constantly, with the possibility of the Rohingya returning home. But their status continues to be uncertain, and we are in communication with Lutheran World Federation-Myanmar to ascertain strategies for dealing with this crisis.

To achieve gender justice, criteria have been established to ensure full and enhanced support for women attending seminary in India through in-country scholarships. This is in addition to ongoing conversations with all companions about achieving gender justice in all aspects of church ministries.

Madagascar, West and Central Africa (MWCA)

This spring, the MWCA area director accompanied Bishop Barbara Collins of the **Upper Susquehanna Synod** on her first trip to her companion church, the **Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL)**. There Bishop Collins attended the LCL Partner's Meeting where she heard about the work of the church in development and evangelism. She was also invited to preach at the LCL Women's Event.

Members of the MWCA team traveled with the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, Global Mission executive director, to Senegal and The Gambia. In Senegal, Malpica Padilla was able to meet with the newly elected president of the **Lutheran Church in Senegal**, the Rev. Adama Faye, and hear his vision for the church.

In the Gambia, the executive director, was able to see how cashews are produced as women began a project supported by ELCA World Hunger funds.

In June, there was another Multicultural Ways of Companion Accompaniment for the Madagascar, West and Central Africa Region, known as the **MWCA4MWCA project**. This time the event was held in Rwanda. The Rev. Angela Shannon along with the Rev. Lamont Wells and the Rev. Themba Mkahabla joined Area Director Andrea Walker as they responded to a request from Bishop Evalister Mugabo of the **Lutheran Church in Rwanda (LCR)** to talk to pastors and evangelists about Lutheran Identity. The workshop was titled "Give Them Grace." There were 38 pastors and evangelists in attendance. The LCR pastors said they gained a new understanding of law and gospel and what it means for preaching. The Rev. Janelle Neubauer, YAGM country coordinator for Rwanda, also attended.



Bishop Barbara Collins addresses the LCL Women's Event.



Some of the participants from the workshop "Give Them Grace" gather with Area Director Andrea Walker (front row, left).



The Rev. Prince Kalisa, left, general secretary of LCR, was the translator for the "Give Them Grace" workshop.



Some of the attendees of the "Give Them Grace" workshop.

Europe, Middle East and North Africa (EuMENA)

On July 30, the EuMENA Area Desk and Global Mission bid farewell to the Rev. Cindy Halmarson and her service to the ELCA as director for EuMENA. Several month ago, Halmarson had announced she would retire Aug. 1 and has returned to Canada to be with her husband and family.

On Sept. 10, the Rev. Said Ailabouni will begin his duties as interim area director for EuMENA for the next two years. Ailabouni previously was the director of EuMENA from 1997 to 2007. He has since been senior pastor for Grace Lutheran in La Grange, Ill. He has also led two other congregations, in Racine, Wis., and Barrington, Ill. We welcome Pastor Said!



The Rev. Cindy Halmarson in Jordan. (Photo: Ben Gray)

Central Europe teacher orientation for the 2018-2019 school year concluded in August. We welcome six new instructors to join our eight renewing teachers. Marissa Dietrich, based in Berlin, will now serve as director.

Other transitions: We bid farewell to the Rev. Derek and Dawn Harman. Derek, Dawn and their two sons, Beckett and Leo, deployed from a California congregation to serve as the pastor of the **Bratislava International Congregation** two years ago. Derek also supported a Horizon ELCA seminary intern, taught theology at the local high school and provided pastoral care for the Central Europe teachers. Retired Bishop Peter Rogness will begin serving as interim for the congregation in September, his first Sunday will be Sept 16.

New Wittenberg Center. In June, The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Wittenberg Center celebrated the retirement of the Rev. Hans Kasch, who directed the center during a decade of activities leading to the 2017 Reformation 500 observances. He is succeeded by the Rev. Inknen Wohlbrand, who will continue to mark upcoming Reformation anniversary events by creating a meeting place where Lutherans from around the world find a common identity. The LWF has just committed to a new location that is under construction. Through

Global Mission, the ELCA has agreed to share the new building with the LWF for the next 10 years and to continue its commitment to the ELCA Wittenberg Center. With the leadership of ELCA missionary the Rev. Robert Moore as director of the ELCA Wittenberg Center, the ELCA will continue to invite ELCA members, pastors, laypeople and scholars into discussions of both Lutheran history and Lutheran identity today.

Missionaries serving the **Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)**, the Rev. **Carrie Smith and Deacon Adrainne Gray**, were invited to speak at the New England Synod Assembly in June. They led plenary and workshop sessions. The New England Synod is a companion to the ELCJHL.

EuMENA contributes funding to the **Defense of Children International-Palestine (DCI-P)** in support of its Accountability and Legal Work and Protection and Community Mobilization Program. A 2018 grant assists DCI-P support minors with legal protection against illegal detention and treatment by law enforcement in both Palestine and Israel. Relatedly, at the Peace Not Walls exhibit during the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, over 293 people wrote to their members of Congress about child detention.

New regional bishop in Hungary. EuMENA Regional Representative Viking Dietrich, Central Europe Teachers Director Marissa Dietrich and Young Adults in Global Mission Co-Country Coordinators Rachel Eskesen and Zach Courter attended the installation of the Rev. Peter Kondor as the bishop of the Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (ELCH). Interim General Bishop Tamas Fabiny presided. Others attending the event were Bishop Jerzy Samiec of Poland and Bishop Arri Kugappi of the Russian Ingrian Church. There were also representatives from Lutheran churches in Finland, Sweden, Slovenia, Romania, Italy and Germany. With the installation of Bishop Kondor, the ELCH will hold an election soon to decide which of the three regional bishops will serve as the general bishop.



Bishop Tamas Fabiny looks on to newly installed Bishop Peter Kondor. (Photo: Viking Dietrich)

Latin America and Caribbean (LAC)

This year, the LAC desk has supported aid to the humanitarian crisis that some of the companion churches in the region are experiencing, whether they are directly or indirectly affected.

Venezuela has a growing economic and political crisis, which is collapsing the country. Venezuela's currency has hyperinflation that could exceed 1 million percent by the end of the year. There is a drastic shortage of food and medicine. About 2.3 million **Venezuelans** (nearly 7 percent of the 32 million inhabitants) are escaping to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil. Though some are traveling farther south to Chile and Argentina. The **Twelfth LWF Assembly (Namibia)** calls upon the LWF and its member churches to assist the Venezuelan people in whatever ways appropriate and available and continue to pray for the people and the situation.

The painful situation of Venezuelan migrants impacts our companions (churches and organizations) in the region. Congregations (in the companion churches) have organized relief services with their scarce resources in Lima (**Bethlehem Congregation, ILP**), Santiago (**Trinidad Congregation, IELCH**), Misiones (**San Pedro Congregation, IELU**), Bogotá (**Rains of Grace Congregation, IELCO**), Medellin (**Mission Emmaus, IELCO**), among others. Global Mission/LAC will be visiting the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela (IELV) in October and is planning a response jointly with Lutheran Disaster Response and Sustainable Development of the Diakonia team.

Two people sit on a highway with their luggage waiting to leave Venezuela.



Since the beginning of the political crisis in April 2018 in **Nicaragua**, there has been an escalation of violence, leading to increased deaths, volatile strikes, arrests, reduced access to hospitals and medicine, land takeovers and a shortage of food forcing the numbers of **Nicaraguans** entering **Costa Rica** to dramatically increase. The weekly flow has reached 3,000. Nearly 17,000 Nicaraguans have filed asylum claims thus far in 2018 (through July) far exceeding the capacity of Costa Rican immigration authorities to process those applications.

For more than 15 years, the **Costa Rican Lutheran Church (ILCO)** has had a Migrant Ministry program, working closely

with other civil society organizations. This program has focused on providing legal and other services to undocumented Nicaraguan immigrants. It is estimated that there are 500,000 or more Nicaraguans trying to normalize their immigration status in Costa Rica. Together, with other migrant rights organizations participating in the country's National Migrant Network, ILCO is providing temporary shelter for the Nicaraguan refugees when they arrive in San Jose (Costa Rica's capital), legal aid for the asylum application process and psycho-social attention for those who have been traumatized by the political violence that forced them to flee their homes and communities.

Global Mission/LAC has responded to both of our companions, **The Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope (ILFE)** and **Centro Interclesial de Estudios Teologicos y Sociales (CIEETS)**.

East and Southern Africa

The 20 ELCA synods and 20 dioceses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania celebrated their long-standing companion synod relationships during the 2018 ELCA Companion Synod and ELCT Companion Dioceses Summit in Moshi, Tanzania, in August. The 140 participants included bishops and lay and ordained leaders of companion synod committees, independent Lutheran organizations that relate to the ELCT, ELCA mission personnel in Tanzania, and staff from Global Mission's East and Southern Africa desk, administration and the Global Formation team and musicians.



The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla and Bishop Isaya Mengele of the Southern Diocese Njombe, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania



Tanzanians and Americans probed the past, present and future of their companion synod/diocese relationships at the August summit.

Conference planners from the ELCA and ELCT set these questions for group reflection: Where have we been? Where are we now? Where are we going? The six new ELCT dioceses with no companions were a particular concern.

Together, summit participants encountered and discussed how the five key values of accompaniment (mutuality, inclusivity, vulnerability, empowerment and sustainability) impact companion relationships and can be used to guide our common work. Learning that on a scale of 100, Americans are at 91 and Tanzanians at 25 on the individualism scale suggested a potential source of tension between individual and collectivist world views.

Two days of interactive conversations and activities led by facilitators from the Mwangaza Educational Partnership helped teams explore the joys and challenges of relationship and focus on the context of their specific relationship. Power imbalance, language barriers and inequality of resources among both ELCT and ELCA synods were discussed. The importance of evangelism and funding the good work of Jesus Christ was stressed. "It is good to be a Lutheran, and we need to make more Lutherans in the world today, said Bishop Alex Mkumbo of the ELCT Central Diocese. "The most important thing to do in a partnership is to go down and create more churches so in the next 100 years Lutherans are on the planet. If we forget to do that, there will be less and less Lutherans in the world and a world without Lutherans will be doomed."

Following an evaluation, the ELCT-ELCA planning committee will clarify the next steps in the process. But the opportunity to share worship and fellowship together was appreciated by all. "I am grateful for unity, integration, bishops of different contexts, people from different contexts, sitting around the table and discussing different matters," said Sr. Jerda Ebyalipima Shumuni from Bukoba in the ELCT Northwest Diocese.

Mission Formation

The Mission Formation team creates resources, conducts trainings and hosts events to equip members in the re-formation of Global Mission engagement narratives and practices through experiential learning.

By the end of 2018, Mission Formation will have partnered with nine synods. In addition, we will have partnered with five synods through the **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)**. The IDI is a tool that builds our capacity to:

- engage in faithful and healthy relationships to participate in God's reconciling and restoring work;
- develop reciprocal relationships of mutuality to proclaim and serve; and
- build capacity to address asymmetries in power and move toward more just and equitable relationships.

Over the course of the last six years, **Glocal** has participated in assemblies and educational events in 30 of our 65 synods, connecting congregational leaders from around the country to issues and values of mission in new and deepening ways.

In the coming six years, we look forward to partnering with the remaining 35 synods as we continue to engage and deepen our understanding and practice of mission, to collectively receive the gifts of the global church, as well as to share resources that leaders can take home to their ministry.

This year has also allowed Mission Formation to hone the ways we engage future leaders via youth programming like the **International Companion Program Orientation, Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE)** and our partnership with **Concordia University** through their **Envision PDX** intensive.



Youth representing nine companion churches and their accompanying eight synods gather in Chicago for orientation.

Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC)

In mid-July, U.N. member states agreed to a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration after a year of consultations and six months of negotiations (the latter in which the Trump administration chose not to participate). Nongovernmental organizations, including the **ACT Alliance of which the ELCA is a member**, reacted mostly positively to the document, which will be adopted at an intergovernmental conference Dec. 10–11 in Marrakech, Morocco. At a news conference hailing the agreement, H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, president of the **72nd session of the U.N. General Assembly**, said, “The reality is that migration is here. It has been here, for centuries. And it will be here, for centuries more. And this agreement addresses this reality. And it offers a way to deal with it.” **LOWC, with assistance from Global Mission Diakonia, earlier organized a panel discussion** at the May negotiating session in New York where partners from **Serbia, Guatemala and Colombia** made presentations on their work with migrants. The **Compact on Migration** is one of two foreseen from the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. The second is the Global Compact on Refugees, also recently concluded in Geneva.

On July 16, the **U.N. Population Fund**, in collaboration with U.N. faith-based partners, including The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and ACT Alliance, offered a side event during the High-Level Political Forum titled “**Strengthening Resilience Through Faith-Based Partnership: Women and Girls’ Health in the Context of Sustainable Development Goal 11.**” Faustina Nillan Manyangu, director for women and children in the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)**, and also the lead on the taskforce on Sustainable Developmental Goal 5, was a panelist at the discussion. Her work focuses on vulnerable women and children who are marginalized and susceptible within the church and the community. Her presence was made possible with the support of Global Mission Diakonia and the LWF – “Waking the Giant” initiative.

Prairie Rose Seminole, ELCA program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries, was a panelist for an event on April 19, titled “Indigenous Women Demanding Climate Justice,” held during the 17th session of the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York. The panel, which also included women from Ecuador and Kenya, highlighted how “indigenous peoples protect 50 percent of the world’s land, but their territories, lands, sacred sites and resources continue to be stolen, seized, militarized and/or threatened without free, prior and informed consent.”



Panelists at a May 14 panel on migration. (Left to right) the Rev. Cindy Halmarson, area director for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa; Rados Djurović, executive director, Asylum Protection Center (Serbia); Silvia Raquec Cum, program director, Asociación Pop No'j (Guatemala); Alaide Vilchis Ibarra, program director, migration policy, ELCA Advocacy; Katrine Ringhus, Advocacy director, LWF – World Service program (Colombia).



Faustina Nillan Manyangu, national director for women and children, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, (second from the right) speaks at a July 16 U.N. panel on women and girls' health. (Photo: Christine Mangale)

Prairie Rose Seminole, ELCA program director for American Indian and Alaska Native Ministries, speaks at an April 19 panel, “Indigenous Women Demanding Climate Justice.”



Peace Not Walls

The **Peace Not Walls** annual gathering, “Deeper and wider: Growing the network by engaging congregations and individuals,” was June 19-20 in Washington, D.C. The gathering was attended by 45 participants, representing 18 ELCA synods. The gathering was a time of learning, sharing and planning around local efforts toward advocacy, awareness raising and accompaniment. **Georgette Rabadi**, principal of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) school in Beit Sahour, gave a presentation to the gathering about the ministry of the ELCJHL, highlighting the work of the schools.

There are currently six teams of young adults of color that are part of the second phase of the



Youth read about the detention of Palestinian youth in the Peace Not Walls exhibit at the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston.



Youth add messages of hope on green olive leaves to the olive tree and have their name written in Arabic on a Peace Not Walls bookmark at the 2018 Youth Gathering in Houston.

Peace Not Walls Young Adult Initiative. One of the goals of this second phase is “equipping young adults of color to lead trips that specifically focus on the intersection of race, culture and class by using a global lens that has local implications.” Each

team is planning a trip for young adults of color to Israel and Palestine in 2019. People interested in joining a trip can learn more at peacenotwalls.wordpress.com/. The 14 trip leaders (from 10 ELCA synods) participated in a trip to Israel and Palestine in May of 2017, a trip-planning training in September 2017 and receive ongoing support as they plan their trips.

Peace Not Walls had a successful exhibit at the **Interactive Center for the 2018 Youth Gathering** in Houston with over 2,400 youths and youth leaders coming through the exhibit. The youth were invited to learn about the conflict through infographic posters and interactive maps, read about the experiences of youth from the ELCJHL schools, read the testimonies of detained Palestinian children and learn about the life and ministry of the ELCJHL and LWF. They were invited to write messages, prayers and greetings on green pieces of paper cut in the shape of olive leaves and glue them on a giant olive tree. Over the course of the three days, the tree became covered in messages of hope. Also, over 293 people wrote to their members of Congress about child detention, and over 2,000 received a bookmark with their name written in Arabic.

In September 2018, Peace Not Walls will invite **ELCA seminarians** to join a pilot program that encourages seminarians to engage in Peace Not Walls by providing an opportunity to develop projects that support the focus of the Peace Not Walls initiative: accompaniment, advocacy and awareness raising.



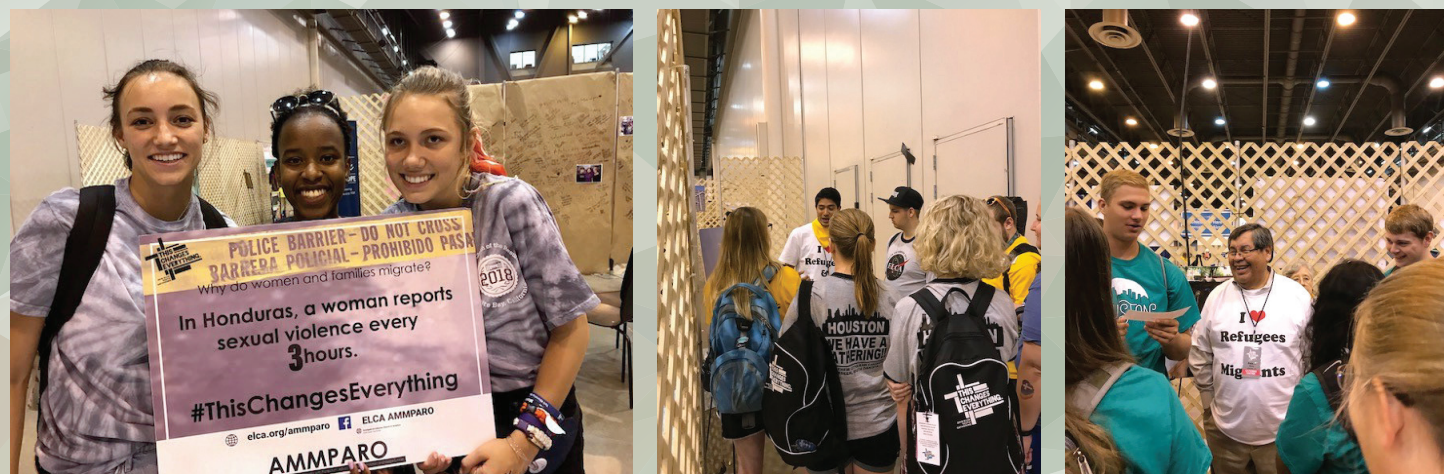
Georgette Rabadi, principal of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land school in Beit Sahour, spoke at the Peace Not Walls gathering in Washington, D.C., in June.

AMMPARO: Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunity

At the ELCA Youth Gathering's Interactive Center, participants were guided through a virtual migrant journey at the AMMPARO/Lutheran Disaster Response exhibit. Participants began their journey from Central America, through Mexico, to the U.S.-Mexico border and then to a U.S. community to learn about the significant challenges of migration. Gathering participants then signed 5,000 cards asking Congress to champion trafficking protections for unaccompanied children, provide a pathway to permanency for "Dreamers" and those with Temporary Protected Status, and provide funding to address root causes of violence and migration in Central America through development programs that work with local communities.

In a related action, several ELCA bishops led delegations of youth from their synods to participate in the Houston #FamiliesBelongTogether rally on June 30. Additional pictures are posted on the ELCA AMMPARO Facebook page.

AMMPARO is encouraging all youth groups to consider deepening their understanding of the ELCA's commitment to migrants and refugees and connect with other migrant and refugee youth in Central America, the United States and Egypt through a new initiative called Bridging Youth to Youth. This initiative has three sessions. Each session is a self-administered module giving youth the chance to get a glimpse at the challenges young people face in different parts of the world. More information is available at ELCA.org/AMMPARO.



Participants for the AMMPARO/Lutheran Disaster Response exhibit were grouped together and guided by volunteers to learn about families and children migrating from Central American to the United States and the value of advocacy.

The AMMPARO network continues to grow with 104 welcoming and sanctuary congregations and participation and activity in 29 synods! The AMMPARO network holds regular conference calls, internationally and domestically, to connect with the AMMPARO team and share information. Also, there was a network AMMPARO family separation webinar on July 30.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and a small group of ELCA leaders recently visited a children's detention center and the AMMPARO pro bono lawyers have been assisting reunited families. There will be a group of volunteer lawyers (also ELCA members) who will help mothers prepare for credible fear interviews at the Dilley, Texas, family detention center during the week of Jan. 13, 2019. Interested lawyers can contact Mary Campbell, Mary.Campbell@elca.org.

Companion synod partners

In preparation for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering, the relationship managers worked with eight participating synods – Nebraska, Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast, Metropolitan Chicago, Western Iowa, Northeastern Iowa, Northwestern Ohio, Southern Ohio and Florida Bahamas – to bring 14 youths from their nine companion churches to visit their congregations and synods and attend, together, the Gathering. The youth traveled from Tanzania, Peru, South Africa, Chile, Serbia, Suriname, Brazil, Namibia and Hungary to participate in the International Companion Program. They were accompanied to Chicago with synodical youth to participate in Mission Formation's orientation. The youth then returned to the synods and attended the Gathering with their host congregations.



A snapshot of some of the international camp counselors with Johanna Olson (lower left). (Photo: Kevin Jacobson)

The International Camp Counselor Orientation took place in Chicago in early May. The International Camp Counselor Program is managed by Domestic Mission and partners with Global Mission for companion communications and orientation training. Twenty-nine young adults came from companion churches in Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Czech Republic, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Hungary, Latvia, Liberia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Panama, Poland, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Swaziland and Zambia. The young adults participated in outdoor ministry camps based in the following synods: Western North Dakota, Northeastern Ohio, Northwestern Ohio, Southern Ohio, Nebraska, South Dakota, La Crosse Area, New Jersey, New England, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, Northeastern Iowa, Southeast Michigan, North/West Lower Michigan, Southwestern Minnesota, Northwestern Minnesota, East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, Oregon, Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana, and Lower Susquehanna. Over a 1,000 people have participated in the program.

Edmonton, Alberta, was the gathering point this June for a two-day consultation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, the South Carolina Synod, Global Mission, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada synod of Alberta and the Territories. This consultation allowed all partners to share their realities, discern, support and encourage one another, and envision new ways of engagements to deepen these companion relationships. Partners celebrated the profound and transformative journey that they have walked with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia since 1940 and felt the faith, love, and inspiration throughout the consultation.



Participants gather for a group photo in Edmonton, Alberta.

During the La Crosse Area Synod Assembly, Bishop Jim Arends, on behalf of the synod, signed a covenant formalizing a new companion synod relationship with the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, a merged church of Lutheran and Reformed traditions. This process was initiated in December 2015 by the Global Mission Committee of the La Crosse Area Synod. By spring 2016, conversation began with the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren because it is sharing the faith in a highly secular context.

Their reformation took place 100 years before the Martin Luther reformation. and, as members of The Lutheran World Federation, they claim Lutheran heritage as well as Reformed heritage.

(Left to right) Stepan Brodsky, Diakonie, ECCB, the Rev. Ben Morris, Lutheran Campus Ministry, La Crosse Area Synod; the Rev. Daniel Zenaty, ECCB moderator, Oliver Engelhart, ECCB ecumenical officer, Bishop Jim Arends. (Photo: Johanna Olson)

International Leaders Program

Faye Lee is beginning her junior year at **Luther College** through the **ELCA's International Women Leaders initiative**, a project of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. Faye is double-majoring in political science and international studies and aspires to work with the United Nations. She represents her home church, the Lutheran Church in Malaysia, which she will serve after graduating. During the summer of 2018, Faye worked as an intern with ELCA Global Church Sponsorship, helping to tell the story of the ELCA's work alongside global companions, including the International Women Leaders initiative.

"I didn't understand at the beginning how important this ministry is to the church and to society and how much effort is expended to sustain this mission every single day," says Faye. "The [International Women Leaders] program has shaped me to be an ally of feminism and gender-justice movements. Being comfortable with uncomfortable issues that face women all over the world today has been one of the key empowering breakthroughs I have experienced through the program."



Faye Lee is entering her third year as an International Women Leaders scholar at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

Thanks to the generous support of donors to *The Campaign for the ELCA*, the International Women Leaders initiative continues to grow in its accompaniment of emerging young leaders like Faye.

International Women Leaders also **celebrates its first graduate: Sarah Abendanon of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Suriname (ELKS)**. Sarah earned a bachelor of arts in marketing from Augsburg University in Minneapolis, Minn.

At the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year, the Global Mission staff welcomed **eight new recipients of four-year scholarships at ELCA colleges and universities**. This brings the total of current International Women Leaders students at ELCA colleges and universities to 26.

This critical initiative for women is thriving, thanks in large part to the faithful partnership of our ELCA colleges and universities. Educational partners now include: **Augsburg University, California Lutheran University, Concordia College, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Luther College, Newberry College, St. Olaf College, Wartburg College, and Wittenberg University**. We also depend on the program's partnership with the ELCA global companion churches that have raised up these



scholars and who will welcome them back after graduation. We're grateful to now partner with 15 companions in the work of the International Women Leaders initiative, spanning **Brazil, Cameroon, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Palestine, Rwanda, Tanzania, Thailand and Zimbabwe**.

The International Leaders Program's "traditional" scholarship work also continues in full force, partnering to support educational opportunities for individuals in a variety of subject areas, educational levels and places of study. Currently, **100 individuals of our companion churches** receive support for degree programs and other leadership development experiences. Three of our ELCA seminaries partner to receive International Leaders Program scholars through this program.

New in the International Leaders Program portfolio this year is the **Global Leadership Academy**, a weeklong networking and education event inspired by the Wittenberg Seminar model. The first academy will be in India in November and will bring together women from churches around the world (including the ELCA) to discuss leadership, gender justice and cultural identity. Further, in 2018, the International Leaders Program team led the completion of "**A Commitment Toward Gender Justice**," a Global Mission strategic biennium plan that will shape the unit's programmatic and financial priorities during the coming years.

Diakonia

In 2018, the Diakonia team has placed a renewed focus on identifying and promoting projects that are transformative, holistic and integrated. **We view transformation through the lens of John 10:10, in Jesus' words, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."** Diakonia defines transformation as: life in abundance, wholeness of community and restoration of relationship. With this theological understanding, the team has taken steps to better measure where transformation is happening and how we can more effectively capture the numerous changes that lead to transformed communities.

One such step has been the addition of a staff member in July, with Dana Dutcher (previously in Global Mission as the relationship manager for Asia Pacific and Madagascar, West, and Central Africa) assuming the new position of manager for impact data and reporting. This position, serving all of Global Mission and embedded in Diakonia, will support enhanced qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis needed to effectively measure the impact of projects being funded across all regions.

In March, two members of the Diakonia team **spent a week in Malawi to visit ELCA World Hunger projects that model transformation**, listening to and learning from community leaders, project participants and project staff.

During this visit, they met and interviewed Shadrack Tsatautenda. Shadrack has been cultivating Cassius trees for two years, and the oldest are nearly ready to sell and transplant. His nursery (over 1,200 trees), was made possible by a small-business loan from the Village Savings and Loan group established by the **Evangelical Lutheran Development Services in Malawi (ELDS)**. In addition to funding small-business plans like Shadrack's, ELDS operates a farming school to train farmers from surrounding villages on crop diversification,



Sara Abendanon at her graduation from Augsburg University.

increasing yields through new planting methods, the use of organic fertilizer and the planting of trees in and around fields to mitigate erosion.

Leading the group on a tour of his nursery, Shadrack surveyed the whole of the orchard in a way that conveyed subtly but clearly the symbiotic nature of his relationship with the land. When asked what it meant to be working to care for the land of his forefathers and foremothers, he said this, “This land has been in my family for five generations. It is meaningful to me to look after the land of my ancestors, and I want to pass this land to future generations.”

The roots of a mature Cassius tree are 4 meters deep, but Shadrack has roots into the land that are much deeper. Caring for the land, coaxing life out of the soil and guiding it to maturity – this work connects Shadrack to the past, plants him firmly in the present and informs his vision for the future. And that vision is guided by his faith: “My faith encourages my work. And what gives me joy is that many people will be able to come and learn from me about how to conserve and care for their land.”

In May, a Diakonia staff member traveled with other members of Global Mission to Nepal to visit the ELCA World Hunger funded work being done through our partner, **The Lutheran World Federation (LWF)-Nepal**. The project focuses on assisting the more than 19,000 Haliya to reintegrate into society and receive the training needed to secure sustainable livelihoods, health and human rights. Haliya are formerly bonded laborers who come primarily from lower castes and minority groups and have historically been deprived of the resources and opportunities to advance economically. Their debts were erased



Shadrack Tsatautenda and one of his 1,200 Cassius trees.

when they were freed in 2008, and seven years later Nepal adopted a constitution that enshrined their rights to equal protection, as well as granted them political representation in the country’s government. Despite these developments toward equality, the Haliya still experience high rates of human rights abuses, homelessness and poverty, with economic mobility and equal protection under the law often remaining elusive.

A Global Mission delegation visited one of the Haliya communities that has welcomed the LWF-Nepal project. Three men and 17 women were gathered at a community shed to meet with an LWF staff member, who for the past three months has been teaching them a variety of fundamental truths about their rights, informing them about livelihood opportunities, promoting individual and family health, equipping them with communication and advocacy skills, and providing basic literacy and numeracy lessons. Known as the Transformative Education Program, it is an intensive, six-month training to educate and empower the Haliya communities about their rights and entitlements.

This particular group calls themselves the **Sela Freed Haliya**, and they came prepared to share what they had gained from participation in the project: “We now have the confidence to speak up. If we met you three months ago, we would have been too shy to talk or even look at you.” “We understand our rights and how we have been discriminated because we are Haliyas.” “Before, our skills were used to benefit others, but now we are the owner of our own skills.”

As an empowered group, the Sela Freed Haliya aspire to address social discrimination and advocate for their rights to receive compensation as promised by the government.



Through Lutheran Disaster Response-International, Diakonia has stewarded more than **\$1.1 million dollars responding to emergencies affecting 15 countries so far this year**. This work has included responses to political conflict in Syria, Iraq, Gaza, Nicaragua and Cameroon, natural disasters in Guatemala, Haiti, Japan, Nepal, Kenya and Somalia, and refugee crises in Bangladesh, Colombia, Jordan and Uganda.

One such response was in **Gaza**, where a team of doctors and nurses (and medicine and medical supplies) traveled from **The Lutheran World Federation’s Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem** to Gaza to support medical teams tending to Palestinians wounded by Israeli forces in May and June. In mid-May there was an escalation in violence and disproportionate use of force against demonstrators at the Gaza border, resulting in more than 3,000 people being injured over the course of three days.

Gaza was already facing a crisis of medical personnel, medicine and supplies, having been under blockade for 11 years. This escalation in violent conflict exacerbated the strain on already depleted resources on hand to care for the affected communities. Augusta Victoria Hospital Chief Executive Officer Walid Nammour said, “We do not merely sympathize with the people in Gaza, we feel their pain and stand with them.”

This response is the extension of the ongoing accompaniment of the Palestinian people through ELCA Global Mission, the Europe, Middle East and North Africa desk and Peace Not Walls.



Members from the Augusta Victoria Hospital team who provided medical care in Gaza.

Global Service

In July, the Global Service team welcomed 13 new missionaries during the New Missionary Orientation in Chicago, Ill. The new missionaries, including Horizon International Seminary interns and English as second language teachers, were challenged to reflect on Global Mission’s accompaniment model of mission, intercultural competencies and systems of race, power and privilege. These new missionaries deployed in August.

Following this orientation, the Global Service team hosted the Summer Missionary Conference in Woodstock, Ill., where over 50 missionaries and all Chicago-based Global Mission staff gathered for a time of work around the Intercultural Development Inventory, an exploration the Doctrine of Discovery by Mark Charles, and a celebration of missionaries who are returning from long-term missionary service.

We are also excited to be recruiting for several missionary positions for the upcoming year, including, but not limited to, a YAGM country coordinator in Argentina/Uruguay, a teaching pastor in Lutheran identity in Honduras, a regional representative for East Africa, a professor at the Lutheran Study Center in Indonesia, and Horizon International internships.

Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)

Notes

In June and July, we welcomed back over 80 YAGM participants completing their year of service. These alumni now join a network of over 890 alumni in the 20 years of the program. We continue to be thankful for the ways in which alumni engage in the life of the ELCA when they return to the United States and the positive impact they have in synods and congregations.

In August, we held our annual orientation for new YAGM at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago where we invited YAGM to engage in conversations around accompaniment, religious pluralism, race, power, privilege, and experiences of gender and sexuality. We ask for your prayers for this group of YAGM, their sending communities and their hosting communities.

On a larger scale, we continue to experience difficulties acquiring visas for a number of country programs during this time of increased xenophobia and nationalism both here in the United States and internationally. Despite this, we were able to deploy all 76 new YAGM participants close to their anticipated date of departure.

We are also excited to announce the four Global Mission short-term recruiters, who will be traveling around the United States from September to early December recruiting for the YAGM program. Michelle Moyer will be recruiting in the Southwest. Hannah Wright Osborn will be recruiting on the West Coast. Samantha DiBiaso will be recruiting in the East, and Lars Anderson will be recruiting in the Midwest. Please contact Michael Busbey at michael.busbey@elca.org if you would like a recruiter to visit a young adult ministry in your synod.



The 2018-2019 YAGM group in front of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



(From left to right) Michelle Moyer, Samantha DiBiaso, Lars Anderson and Hannah Wright Osborn



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God's work. Our hands.