



# Global Mission Updates



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

Summer/Fall  
2020

*“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way,  
you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*

Galatians 6:2

Dear friends of Global Mission,

COVID-19 has disrupted our lives. The pandemic has had an impact beyond people’s health, causing the closures of national borders and wreaking havoc on local and national economies. The situation in the United States has reached critical levels, with the number of infections and deaths being the highest in the world. Millions of people have lost their jobs, and thousands of businesses have closed their doors permanently. While individualism is highly prized in this society, lockdown measures and physical distancing have rekindled the need for communal engagement, not only within family structures but even in the workplace and other contexts.

Communities and countries have taken measures to protect themselves with the goal of flattening the curve of infections and making sure not to overtax their health care systems. For that purpose, resources have been allocated to meet these needs. While these efforts should continue and even increase, this should not lead us to ignore the cries of others or avoid our moral responsibility toward them. One of the dangers in this situation is for us to concentrate on ourselves. This attitude leads to the most common sin among us humans. Martin Luther described it as *Incurvatus in se*, being focused on your own self. The gospel message is clear: the problems of my neighbor become mine as well. That is why we are instructed to “bear one another’s burdens.” The summons to accompany our neighbor in need is not just a good, common-sense practice. It does not rise from an egalitarian sociopolitical ideology. As we seek the well-being of our neighbors and bear their burdens with them, we “fulfill the law of Christ.”

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is accompanying congregations and synods to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Financial resources have been made available to ensure that congregations will continue to serve vulnerable communities and individuals. At the same time, through the Global Mission unit, the ELCA is responding to the needs of our companion churches. So far, we have responded to 52 requests in 35 countries, providing \$1.5 million in assistance. Here you will read stories about our joint global response. We are walking with our companion churches, bearing one another’s burdens and, together, seeking to restore fractured lives and vulnerable communities.

Oftentimes, when I am visiting ELCA congregations, people ask, “What can I do?” My response is simple: “You can pray, participate and provide.” I invite you to think about the thousands of lives we touch together with our companion churches. As we **pray, participate and provide**, our lives are touched and transformed, receiving the witness, love, expertise and shoulders of our companions to lean on.

Pax,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rafael Malpica Padilla". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

# Table of Contents

---

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Africa   | 4  |
| Asia and the Pacific   | 7  |
| Europe   | 9  |
| Latin America and the Caribbean  | 11 |
| AMMPARO: Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunity | 13 |
| Middle East and North Africa   | 15 |
| Peace Not Walls  | 17 |
| Lutheran Office for World Community  | 18 |
| Companion Synod Program  | 20 |
| Diakonia   | 23 |
| Mission Formation  | 25 |
| International Leaders Program  | 26 |
| Global Service   | 29 |

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 and seeks to honor the unique context of each.



As a district pastor for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (ELCC), the Rev. Bebe is responsible for 10 congregations in the northeast region of the church. (Photo: Mr. Duclavier)

## International Workshop on Pastoral Ministry by Women in Context in Cameroon

Just before protection measures were put in place to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, women leaders gathered in Yaoundé, Cameroon, for the International Workshop on Pastoral Ministry by Women in Context: Gender Justice and Women's Leadership, supported by the ELCA's Global Mission unit. These women serve as pastors or are studying to become pastors. Most were from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (ELCC), but a few came from member churches of the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon.

The Rev. Dr. Jeannette Ada Maina, the first ordained woman in the ELCC, serves as executive secretary of its Department of Women and Social Affairs and is also vice president of the African region for the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Her experience in the ELCC moved her to bring these women together so they might feel strengthened, encouraged and supported in their work and experience a community of women in ministry. Other Protestant churches in Cameroon have been ordaining women for longer, and the community

was enriched by these women sharing their experiences with the women of the ELCC.

Organizers had hoped to include women from churches in Ethiopia and Madagascar; the evolving pandemic made that impossible, but there was international participation from the ELCA through the Rev. Dr. Elisabeth Johnson, a professor at the ELCC seminary in Meiganga. The Rev. Dr. Joy Philip, of Martin Luther University College in Canada, happened to be in Cameroon doing sabbatical research and led a workshop and discussion. Dr. Colette Bouka-Coula, previously of the LWF, surveyed its work on poverty and gender justice.

## Adapting to Restrictions, a Village Church Redefines Itself and Thrives

On March 15, two days after Kenya detected its first case of COVID-19, Ngatu Lutheran Church was ordered to stop holding services. Soon afterward, church leaders in Ngatu got together to plan. What they came up with – the way they've defined "church" – has increased congregational vitality, created space for dialogue, reached the unchurched and more than doubled weekly giving.

After sharing the word on May 31 at a boma in Ngatu, Kenya, a family gives a calf as an offering to the church. (Photo: Daniel Melitah)





The church lies 80 miles southeast of Nairobi in a broad water-catchment area containing 51 “bomas.” (In the local Maasai and Kamba communities, a boma is a homestead with a common patriarch and members of extended families; because of polygamy and livestock, it can be quite large.) The church leaders identified 16 bomas to visit each Sunday, preaching, reading Scripture and praying with residents. They gave 17 volunteers a crash course on leading boma services, including the government’s guidelines for handwashing and physical distancing. They started making copies of the church announcements to give to every boma.

The Ngatu Lutheran Church leaders created a WhatsApp group, which evangelist Sayo Kilungu used to post recordings of the readings and sermon and organize discussions. They also arranged for people to send offerings through M-Pesa, a ubiquitous mobile-money platform in East Africa. Soon their total weekly offerings rose from about \$90 to \$210.

Head church elder Simon Kyengo said the new system has been particularly powerful for those previously unreached by church and the gospel. “The church gives light. It gives direction to life. Especially in the context of coronavirus, they see that there is hope,” Kyengo said.

Ngatu is a member of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC).

### **Isolated, Far From Family and Staying Positive**

When the universities in Tanzania closed, the Rev. Augustine Kezie was stuck 3,000 miles from his family, in a country where he didn’t know the language, and uncertain of what might come next.

Kezie – who hails from Kembujeh, a village in Brikama, The Gambia – is the recipient of an ELCA scholarship for theological studies, supporting the Evangelical Lutheran Church of The Gambia (ELCTG).

Kezie was studying at Tumaini University Makumira when Tanzania’s first COVID-19 case was detected. The university, following government orders, wouldn’t allow him to stay on campus. The ELCA tried to arrange flights to get him home, but The Gambia and Senegal (which borders The Gambia on three sides) had closed their borders and airports as coronavirus cases multiplied globally.

Kezie was able to lodge at a guesthouse in Arusha. Stuck there with the guesthouse staff, he felt isolated at first. “After some days I got to know them and appreciate their service,” he said. “They had a kitchen [restaurant] where I ate breakfast, lunch and dinner.” The kitchen staff helped him learn Swahili, the main language of Tanzania.



ELCA scholarship recipient the Rev. Augustine Kezie waited out the closure of his university due to coronavirus restrictions.

He said he spent his days reading the Bible and working on a project to translate the liturgy into his mother tongue, Balanta. The guesthouse, though basic, had Wi-Fi and a television, so he could stay connected to the news and his family.

He has a 7-year-old boy, Benson, and a 3-year-old daughter, Fatou, living with an aunt in Guinea-Bissau, a day's bus ride, across two national borders, from their home in The Gambia. Kezie's wife died in 2017 after a short illness, just a month before his scholarship in Tanzania began. Their daughter was only a year old.

The Gambia is about 90% Muslim. Kezie's tribe, the Balanta, originally come from Guinea-Bissau. "But our fathers and grandfathers are born in The Gambia," he said.

## Skill Development Projects in Ghana

The churches and Christian institutions in West Africa are not sitting on the sidelines as the African continent, like the rest of the world, battles COVID-19. The ELCA has ongoing partnerships with churches and institutions in West Africa, including Good News Theological Seminary, situated in Accra, Ghana.

In addition to providing theological education for the African Instituted Churches (AIC), Good News is also implementing a skills development project to serve Ziope-Wudzedeke communities in the Volta region.

The project aims to alleviate hunger and poverty and educate farmers on improved agricultural techniques and soil conservation so they can increase their yields. It also trains women in practical skills, such as sewing and African cloth design production, that they can use to support themselves and their families. The project is supported by ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response.

When COVID-19 cases impacted Ghana, the project organizers decided to repurpose its activities to help the community prevent the spread of the virus. In May, the women produced and distributed about 1,300 masks to individuals in their community. The project is also sensitizing people in the community about how they can prevent further infections, distributing more than 1,000 Veronica Buckets (buckets with faucets) so community members have running water to wash their hands.

According to James Akoesheihu, the project field worker, people have expressed their gratitude for Good News Theological Seminary's skills development project, telling him that "the project was blessing their community by doing this selfless work. God should look upon what you're doing and bless you and the people in America for us."



James Akoesheihu is a project field worker for Good News Theological Seminary's skills development project.



This skills development project by Good News Theological Seminary serves Ziope-Wudzedeke communities in the Volta region of Ghana. The project is supported by ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response.



# Asia and the Pacific

## The “Exodus” Event Created by COVID-19

While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges to those seeking in-place refuge, many parts of the world have also dealt with migration patterns. This has been a particular challenge in India, where the normal internal migration of millions has now caused – in the words of church leaders – a “reverse exodus.”

Logan Samuel Ratnaraj, a staff member of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India (UELCI), writes: “The exodus of the migrant workers is similar to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, the Promised Land, where milk and honey flowed. Previously our people from the native land with a great hope migrated to promising cities where they could find a decent livelihood. The distant lands pulled them with its promising prosperity; now the same prosperous land, in the name of security, pushed them out of the land. This caused a ‘reverse migration.’ For the poor migrants, the land of prosperity has now become a land of doom. This ‘push’ and ‘pull’ movement only affects the poor.

“This is an unprecedented exodus. This exodus really cuts across religions, caste, ethnicity, gender and communities, and the commonality is that the poor and desolate are the worst-affected victims.”

In response to this, the UELCI hopes to launch relief ventures from among its 12 member churches around India. These will provide for transit camps on the premises of churches and mission institutions to meet the daily needs of migrants. To help them sustain themselves, long-term plans call for skills training, income-generating programs, free education for migrant children, access to the churches’ unused agricultural lands, and new avenues for group employment in the churches.

## Clean Drinking Water Even When Water Is Abundant

The Brahmaputra River, one of the great waterways of India, flows through the state of Assam and into Bangladesh. But this doesn’t mean the people living along it are blessed with water. The Bodo Evangelical Lutheran Church (BELC) reports devastating floods during the monsoons, droughts during the dry seasons and a general lack of clean, safe water at all times.

The people of Konsaigaon, in particular, have always had to walk far from their homes to get water. Many are day laborers with limited time for this. They are often



Using its own resources, the UELCI has begun modeling care for migrant workers in places where they are “stuck,” in this instance at a major train station.



Cholita (third from the left) reads prayers of dedication at the start of well-boring operations.

compelled to drink unsafe water, which causes gastrointestinal diseases. Due to a lack of knowledge and poor medical facilities, most of these diseases can turn fatal. Children who survive face chronic, incurable illnesses as they grow up.

Digging a well might seem relatively simple. However, gaining access to the best water source meant building a road into the hills for equipment to be brought in, and pipes had to be laid to reach the village. Added to this were delays caused by a COVID-19 outbreak.

Work finally commenced in mid-May 2020, with a young volunteer, Cholita, managing the project. Within days, workers struck water almost 800 feet below ground. The water is pure, reported BELC Bishop Ichahak Muchahary. "It's been a great day of blessing to those living in that place. Hallelujah," he said.

This new water source will directly affect 300 villagers. But the effects will reach much further, with some 10,000 indirect beneficiaries, including those attending church trainings, meetings and seminars at the church mission point there.

### COVID-19 Brings On New Forms of Ministry

Amid physical distancing and isolation, the diakonia department of the Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP) in Indonesia has initiated many new forms of ministry outreach.

There are already an estimated 81.87 million smartphone users in Indonesia, roughly a third of its population. Taking advantage of this, the diakonia department has produced materials for YouTube and Facebook and other virtual resources that can be used not just during the pandemic but at other times as well.

Among the many activities transpiring online are pastoral care training on Zoom, building awareness of gender-based violence, staging an online art competition for children, providing health care resources, posting video blogs from children and youth, and offering spiritual encouragement through music and song.

According to the Rev. Debora Sinaga, director of the diakonia department, "Many people have been economically affected by the pandemic, in addition to many women and children hit by the violence of the situation." These social media resources give people the opportunity to "freely express their situation."



Screenshots from YouTube, Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP).



## ELCA Leaders in Europe and MENA

During COVID-19 lockdowns across Europe and the Middle East, ELCA clergy serving in different countries and contexts were invited to meet weekly online. This meetup gave them the opportunity to support one another and share strategies and resources, not only for online ministry during lockdown but also for reopening their church doors.

Pictured from left to right, and from top to bottom: Adrainne Gray, Geneva; Katie Osweiler, Brussels; Kathy and Robert Moore, Leipzig; Tim Stewart, Copenhagen; Mari Thorkelson, Berlin; Bradn Buerkle, Moscow; Meghan and Gabi Aelabouni, Jerusalem; Kyle and Anna Svennungsen and children, Bratislava; Rachel Eskesen and Zach Courter, Budapest; Andy Willis, Geneva; Carrie Ballenger, Jerusalem; and Viking Dietrich, Berlin. Not pictured: Anna Ballan, Helsingborg; Claudia Bergmann, Erfurt; Ingebjørg Vik Laugaland, Stavanger; Christie Manisto and Steve Saari, Cairo; Jeff Martin, Edinburgh; Mandy Oleson, Salzburg; Chad Rimmer, Geneva; and Anja Stuckenberger, Bochum.



## Central Europe Teachers Program

In June 2019, conference calls began between the Global Mission's Europe Desk and California Lutheran University's Graduate School of Education to raise awareness of Central Europe Teachers (CET) teaching opportunities in Slovakia and Poland, and to explore other topics of mutual interest.

Dr. Tymika Wesley, chair of the school's department of learning and teaching, traveled to Slovakia in November 2019 and, with regional representative Viking Dietrich, toured the schools of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic (ECAC). Wesley was able to meet with the current Central Europe teachers and ECAC principals.

In February 2020, manager for relationships Johanna Olson traveled to California Lutheran University to present the CET program to four education classes (85 to 90 students). The first two classes were co-presented with CET education coordinator Naomi Sveholm, who participated from Bratislava, Slovakia, via Zoom. The goal of the trip was to raise awareness of CET among education majors (and other students) as an international program to consider for postbaccalaureate study.

Another outcome from the discussions and trips is that Wesley, in coordination with Sveholm, will provide pedagogical training modules to current and incoming Central Europe teachers.

Clockwise from left: Edward Parks, Central Europe Teachers (CET); Viking Dietrich; David Wunsch; Dr. Tymika Wesley; Naomi Sveholm; and Matthew Gardner, formerly of CET. From November 2019, in Košice, Slovakia.



## With Roma People and for Roma People

With the goal of seeking justice for marginalized groups, and in light of European resistance to all “people on the move,” Global Mission’s Europe Desk continues to focus on Roma communities. This has led to Global Mission providing several grants, made possible with support from ELCA World Hunger, to Lutheran churches in Hungary and Romania as well as to ecumenical humanitarian agencies in Serbia. Some of these projects aim to support women and children by providing drop-in centers where children and their families can receive educational and basic-needs support. Others are advocacy-oriented, focusing on community mobilization and income generation.

Accompaniment of churches in Central Europe as they relate to Roma communities has been a key feature of the Central Europe Young Adults in Global Mission program. In September, in Novi Sad, Serbia, Global Mission partnered with Eurodiaconia, Swiss Church Aid and the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization to bring together agents for Roma inclusion. According to a Sept. 20 press release from Eurodiaconia, 56 representatives of projects supported by these organizations discussed “Roma participation and representation in civil society as well as in political decision-making processes. The meeting was based on the observation that Roma people have adapted to changing circumstances, patterns of discrimination and marginalization over decades. Moreover, policy efforts have often pictured Roma as a homogenous group and failed to acknowledge the desires of Roma people. The event stressed the need to change approaches and institutions by involving Roma people, as expressed in the ‘with Roma and for Roma’ paradigm.”



Representatives of ELCA-supported projects gathered for a dinner (clockwise from left): Monika Brandsch, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania; Erzsébet Molnár and Róbert Oláh, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (ELCH); Jovana Kokir, Church World Service Belgrade; Marko Tosic and Mina Lukic, Center for Youth Integration, Belgrade; Viking Dietrich, ELCA’s Global Mission unit; Sladjana Jovanovic and Stanka Jankovic, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, Novi Sad; Annamarie Fazekas, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania; Katy Ajer, ELCA’s Global Mission unit; and Mihály Györfi, ELCH.



# Latin America and the Caribbean

## Leaders Participate in Popular Education Training

Over the past 11 years, the EPES Foundation (Educación Popular en Salud) has held a participatory, community-based course focusing on health issues and using the methodology of popular education. In January, Global Mission supported the participation of six leaders from three companion churches: the Lutheran Church of Peru (IL-P), the Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope (ILFE), and the Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala (ILAG).

Four of the six participants were women leaders, and the other two were male nursing students from Pueblos Originarios (Indigenous communities). During the two-week course they learned about participatory strategies for health promotion. The “hands-on learning” provided a space for the participants to connect with the community leaders where EPES has a presence and to develop an action plan with them.

Cynthia Kancha Mesa, a nurse who coordinates the Cusco Holistic Women’s Health Program, Lutheran Church of Peru, said: “The popular education methodologies proposed during the Escuela will allow us to strengthen the community work we develop in Cusco and expand overall participation in our work. The project we designed at the Escuela, which aims to strengthen the current program, promotes holistic and dignified health addressing mental health, the promotion and prevention of noncommunicable diseases, healthy environments and the management of solid waste.”

## Ayni First Interamerican Lutheran Conference

In February, the Latin America and Caribbean Desk of Global Mission and Latino Ministries of Domestic Mission celebrated the first Interamerican Lutheran Conference in Bogotá, Colombia. The name of the event was “Ayni,” a Quechua word that means reciprocity and mutuality in the relationships among people and communities. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for Spanish-speaking communities in the continent to meet, connect, share best practices and collaborate in the areas of congregational vitality and sustainability, ministry among Indigenous communities, youth work, migration and theological education. Over a hundred participants gathered, representing the Lutheran churches of the Latin American and Caribbean region and the ELCA’s Latino congregations, Native American communities and seminaries.



Leaders from the South and Central America Lutheran churches. (Photo: EPES)



Attendees of the “Ayni” event in Bogotá, Colombia. (Photo: Jorge Diaz)



Discussion of the participants in the south to south exchange. (Photo: Gustavo Driau)

## South to South Exchange

In March, the Salvadoran Lutheran Church (SLS), Costa Rican Lutheran Church (ILCO), Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO) and Lutheran Church of Peru (IL-P) participated in a “south-south” exchange on the CREST model for the treatment of trauma victims, especially migrants and refugees. The exchange was facilitated and accompanied by Global Mission’s regional representatives in Latin America.

Pastors and lay leaders in Central America were the first to be trained in the CREST model (through the Wings of Hope Foundation in Germany), beginning with the SLS in El Salvador and expanding later to ILCO in Costa Rica. This south-south exchange included the Rev. Vilma Rodriguez, coordinator of the SLS Center for the Attention of Trauma Victims, and Ruth Quiros of Costa Rica, who completed the CREST training and now applies it to her work in ILCO’s shelter for refugees fleeing from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries.

During the weeklong exchange in Colombia and Peru, Rodriguez and Quiros were able to interact with Venezuelan migrants currently served by the migrant ministry programs of IELCO and IL-P, and to hear from church staff and volunteers about the psychological traumas that Venezuelan migrants have experienced. Likewise, IELCO and IL-P leaders were introduced to the CREST model and its successful application in Central America. This south-south exchange laid the groundwork for both IELCO and IL-P future trainings on the effective treatment of trauma victims.

## The COVID-19 Crisis

Suddenly, a global health crisis has exploded, changing everything. The pandemic has impacted the work of the Latin America and Caribbean Desk of Global Mission and the companions as well. As an immediate preventive measure to protect our missionaries and the companion churches, some of our missionaries returned to the United States while others remained in their country of service. Today, missionaries continue to serve alongside our companions but from a distance. Two of the 10 Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) country programs are in Argentina/Uruguay and Mexico. For the well-being of the volunteers and our host churches and organizations, all the YAGM programs around the world were closed this year. The young volunteers returned to their families in the United States.

In April and May, Global Mission supported over \$150,000 in emergency requests from companion churches in nine Latin American countries – Brazil, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela. These emergency projects provide food and basic hygiene supplies to support families in poor communities where COVID-19 infection rates are higher and the pandemic has made the economic situation even more precarious. Amid stringent quarantine measures, companion churches have identified responsible ways to deliver basic humanitarian assistance to affected families.

ELCA companions who now find themselves on the front lines of the COVID-19 response are also reaping the unexpected benefits of training experiences financed by Global Mission months before the pandemic began. As mentioned earlier in this report, three leaders of the Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala (ILAG) participated in the EPES International School on popular health education in January. Within weeks of their return to Guatemala, the first cases of COVID-19 began to appear in remote rural areas, but there were no basic educational materials on the virus in the local Indigenous language. Two of the ILAG participants in the EPES school were able to find translated materials through the International Mayan League, edited those translations and began distributing those resources in Indigenous communities where the ILAG has a church presence.



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

---

## **AMMPARO International Companions Support COVID-19 Relief**

Four AMMPARO companions in Latin America and the Caribbean have received additional funds to support their work with COVID-19 victims in Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica and Guatemala.

In Mexico, the Grupo de Trabajo sobre Política Migratoria (Working Group on Migration Policies) is a network of organizations that work for the protection of migrants in Mexico.

Casa del Migrante Saltillo is a shelter that sees 7,000 migrants a year, including many families with children. To protect those currently being sheltered from exposure to COVID-19, the house has had to close to new residents, but it operates a critical door ministry for the hundreds of migrants per month who come seeking such basics as food and supplies as well as telephone access to communicate with immigration officials and family back home.

The Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM, Mennonite Social Action Commission) is providing humanitarian assistance in San Pedro Sula to the large population of deported migrants being returned from the United States, many of whom have been infected with COVID-19. The government of Honduras has set up facilities for returned migrants but is not providing any services or support, so CASM is helping to meet some of those needs.

In Guatemala, Pop No'j assists returned migrant children from the United States and Mexico, many of whom have contracted the virus. With help from the organization, the families of these children are setting up gardens to feed themselves during the pandemic. The project coordinator is Marcos Ramirez, who serves as a legal adviser on migration issues for Pop No'j. Additionally, Marcos participated in a "training of trainers" on the Sphere humanitarian standards in August 2019. Prior to this ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) event, no one on the Pop No'j staff had been trained in global standards for the organization and delivery of humanitarian aid. Thanks to Marcos' training, supported by the ELCA, he is the ideal person to coordinate the COVID-19 emergency response of Pop No'j for migrant children and their families in the Huehuetenango region of Guatemala.

In Costa Rica, the Iglesia Luterana Costarricense (Costa Rican Lutheran Church) also assists migrants previously housed in the church's shelter who now need food assistance and personal hygiene items amid the pandemic.

## **ELCA's Sanctuary Discernment Process Continues**

At the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, members asked the ELCA Church Council for guidance on what it means to be a sanctuary church body, synod or congregation. That guidance is still forthcoming, but in January, leaders of sanctuary synods gathered with leaders of sanctuary congregations in San Francisco to share their experiences and insights.

## ELCA Mission Developers Have Border-Immersion Experience in Tijuana, Mexico and San Diego

Three hundred ELCA mission developers, bishops and directors for evangelical mission had the opportunity to visit San Diego for their training in February. The training focused especially on learning more about immigration, with a daylong experience that included worship at the border wall, visits to migrant shelters and other programs accompanying migrants on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Current immigration policies were addressed as well as opportunities to connect to AMMPARO. Participants had the opportunity to debrief their experiences and commit to action steps to protect vulnerable migrants, both on the journey as well as in the participants' communities.



The Iglesia Luterana Mexicana group, with the Rev. Jaime Dubon, worship on the Mexico side of the border wall.



# Middle East and North Africa



Christians have become the remnant of the remnant in the Holy Land, but they remain faithful, from the youngest to the oldest. This picture was taken by former missionary Ben Gray at a confirmation service at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Beit Sahour, near Bethlehem.

## Prayers for Christians in the Middle East

The Middle East and North Africa Desk asks the ELCA to pray for Christians in the Middle East who are suffering. Until recently, Christians in the Middle East were a robust minority community with long histories and deep interfaith relationships, but in some countries the wars of the 21st century have reduced the number of Christians to single percentages. Decades of conflict, the weakness of financial institutions and governments, and this year's repudiation of a "two-state" solution for Israel and Palestine have driven a mass exodus of Christians from the region. Church leaders in the Middle East are speaking of a Kairos moment, deeply concerned for the future of their churches and of Christian witness in the Middle East.

## Seeking the Safety and Viability of Christian Communities in the Middle East

The ELCA's Global Mission unit works with Christians in the Middle East to build leadership capacity, provide relief to refugees, support strategies for sustainable Christian communities, and strengthen Arab Christian awareness in the West. Global Mission supports its companion churches in their efforts to witness publicly and to provide their members with a safe and viable future in the region.

Though bilateral support, historically, has gone to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), the ELCA now provides World Hunger support to Christians and others in need throughout the region through ecumenical organizations such as the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) in Beirut and the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services in Cairo. The ELCA also provides Mission Support to Arabic-speaking seminaries in the Middle East, namely the Near East School of Theology in Beirut and the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo.

The displacement of millions of people in the Middle East makes "people on the move" the focus of the ELCA's action for refugees, migrants and internally displaced people. Support to the Middle East has mainly been administered through such agencies as the Middle East Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, St. Andrew's Refugee Services in Cairo, and the ELCJHL.

Please read the monthly update from the Middle East Council of Churches found at [mecc.org/resources](http://mecc.org/resources).





Through ELCA financial support, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) has reached out to many in need — including Fatmeh, one of hundreds of Lebanese people receiving medication and food aid during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo: Our Lady Dispensary Team/MECC)



# Peace Not Walls

At the end of January 2020, six new bishops (having served two years or less) traveled to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) to meet with Bishop Ibrahim Azar to learn about the church and its history amid the Israeli occupation. Bishop Susan Briner of the Southwestern Texas Synod, Bishop Deborah Hutterer of the Grand Canyon Synod, Bishop Pedro Suárez of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, Bishop Kevin Strickland of the Southeastern Synod, Bishop Yehiel Curry of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, and Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar of the Oregon Synod were delegate members. Bishop James Gonía of the Rocky Mountain Synod, chair of the Global Mission committee for the Conference of Bishops, also participated. Accompanying the delegation were the Rev. Saïd Ailabouni, who is area desk director for the Middle East and North Africa; LaShonda Hicks-Curry, spouse of Bishop Yehiel Curry; and the Rev. Kimberly Gonía, spouse of Bishop James Gonía.

The bishops who participated in the trip told Peace Not Walls that they would encourage their colleagues and church members to participate in and lead trips to the Holy Land, and to engage the living stones, meeting and talking with people, in addition to visiting holy and historical sites. Peace Not Walls can provide visitors with opportunities to worship at the local Palestinian Lutheran church, visit the ELCJHL schools, tour the Lutheran World Federation's Augusta Victoria Hospital, share a meal with Palestinian Lutherans and learn from human rights organizations.

## Peace Not Walls 2020 Virtual Series

For six Saturdays in a row, beginning on April 25, Peace Not Walls participants in the United States and partners in the Middle East discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting Lutheran ministries in the Holy Land and how the Lutheran World Federation's Jerusalem program and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) are continuing their vital medical, ecclesiastical and educational work. In addition, these virtual meetings allowed participants and partners to discuss aspects of the ongoing Israeli occupation, especially the expansion of Israeli settlements, annexation plans and other human-rights violations occurring in the shadow of the pandemic. All of the recorded webinars are available on the ELCA webpage.

If you participated in the **Peace Not Walls Virtual Series** live or watched the recorded webinars, please share your feedback with Karin ([Karin.Brown@elca.org](mailto:Karin.Brown@elca.org)).

From left to right: LaShonda Hicks-Curry; Bishop James Gonía, Rocky Mountain Synod, chair of the Conference of Bishops Advisory Committee; the Rev. Kimberly Gonía; Bishop Deborah Hutterer, Grand Canyon Synod; the Rev. Saïd Ailabouni; Bishop Pedro Suárez, Florida-Bahamas Synod; Bishop Kevin Strickland, Southeastern Synod; Dr. Mitri Raheb, ELJCHL and Diyar Consortium; Bishop Yehiel Curry, Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar, Oregon Synod; and Bishop Susan Briner, Southwestern Texas Synod. (Photo: Adrainne Gray)



## Trip Planning Resources

If your synod is planning a trip to the Holy Land, contact Karin (PNW coordinator) for resources at [Karin.Brown@elca.org](mailto:Karin.Brown@elca.org).



The 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.  
(Photo: Courtesy of U.N. Women/Ryan Brown)  
Creator: U.N. Women/Ryan Brown | Credit: U.N. Women/Ryan Brown.  
Copyright: U.N. Women/Ryan Brown

## U.N. Commission on the Status of Women

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the 20th anniversary of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; the 10th anniversary of the establishment of U.N. Women; the fifth anniversary of the global Sustainable Development Goals; and the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Everyone is asked to join the online dialogues ongoing at #ShapingOurFuture.

This year, due to the pandemic, the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women was scaled back. The commission convened on March 9 for a procedural meeting that included opening statements and adoption of the Political Declaration.

## Generation Equality Forum

The Generation Equality Forum – a civil society–centered, multistakeholder global gathering for gender equality – was scheduled to kick off in Mexico City in May and conclude in Paris in July. The forum has now been postponed until the first half of 2021.

The U.N. Commission on Population and Development and the U.N. Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues were also postponed.

## Gender, Faith and COVID-19 Resources

On April 27, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed launched “Rise for All” – a global advocacy effort led by women leaders to galvanize global solidarity and to support the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. As the world continues to deal with the pandemic, faith actors have been at the forefront of the crisis response, providing much-needed relief, educating communities on how to reduce transmission and engaging in government advocacy.



## Defending Peace and Human Rights in Colombia

On Feb. 26, the Lutheran Office for World Community co-hosted (on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation, Caritas Internationalis and the World Council of Churches) a briefing by four winners of the National Prize for the Defense of Human Rights in Colombia: Clemencia Carabalí, Ricardo Esquivia, Annye Páez Martínez and Marco Romero. The group was visiting New York and Washington, D.C., under the sponsorship of Diakonia and Act Church of Sweden to discuss the ongoing challenges of protecting human rights and encouraging efforts toward peace despite limited implementation of the 2016 agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).



Four winners of the National Prize for the Defense of Human Rights in Colombia present at a briefing. (Photo: Christine Mangale, Lutheran Office for World Community)

## Other U.N. Events From June Through December

“AIDS 2020,” the 23rd AIDS conference, was held virtually in San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., July 6-10. “HIV 2020 Online,” a series of virtual convenings, takes place June through October.

The virtual Interfaith Pre-conference, held June 29 to July 3, was a series of learning, sharing, networking and capacity-building webinars around the theme of resilience and renewal.

U.N. General Assembly high-level week, which ushers in the annual General Debate, will take place Sept. 22-29. However, for the first time since the founding of the United Nations, world leaders will not gather in person in New York. Heads of state and government or ministers representing member states have been asked to address the General Debate via prerecorded video statements. The General Debate week will be followed by the six main committees of the General Assembly. The Lutheran Office for World Community closely follows the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues).

# Companion Synod Program

---

## **Global Committee Reorganized in Upper Susquehanna Synod**

Upper Susquehanna accompanies the Lutheran Church in Liberia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria–Ansbach-Würzburg Diocese. Upper Susquehanna Bishop Barbara Collins shared that she had merged both companion synod relationships into a seven-to-eight-person global committee chaired by the Rev. Ann Zimmerman.

The work of the committee is to facilitate yearly trips between the two companion churches (before the COVID-19 outbreak, representatives of the LCL were to visit this June and attend the Upper Susquehanna Synod assembly; representatives of the Ansbach-Würzburg diocese are anticipated in June 2021 for the synod assembly). Bishop Collins hopes that this exchange can build to the point where the synod sends a delegation to Liberia and, in the same year, hosts a visitor or delegation from Ansbach-Würzburg.

Bishop Collins wants the Global Committee to support and send applicants for Young Adults in Global Mission, engage Lutheran World Federation and its resources, and raise awareness for Global Health Ministries.

This integrated committee is a new approach in companion synod engagement. We will learn much from Upper Susquehanna in this process!

## **Virtual Meetings**

Although travel hasn't been possible, we continue to meet using various online platforms. Technology has always been a necessity, but nothing has made this fact clearer than the pandemic. This new reality has us rethinking how we engage with our partners, and it has tested the technological expertise of many of us.

This July the Central African Republic Network was planning to hold its annual Network Gathering in North Dakota, but the risks that come with travel have persuaded the network, like many other organizations, to meet virtually. Platforms such as Teams, Zoom and Skype enable us to see one another from the safety and comfort of our homes or offices. This, of course, does not replace the benefit of human contact that comes with meeting in person, but seeing one another, if only on a computer screen, certainly brings great joy and a sense of relationship-building.

The Russia Network Meeting, scheduled for Oct. 5-7, 2020, in Chicago, has been adapted to an online meeting due to COVID-19. The Russia Network is composed of the Northwest Washington Synod, companion to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in European Russia (ELCER); the Northeastern Minnesota Synod, companion to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia; and the Central States Synod, companion to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Urals, Siberia and Far East (ELCUSFE), Far East Deanery.



## Companion Prayer Call with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon

This spring the South Dakota Synod requested a prayer call with its companion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (ELCC), and invited the Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, another companion synod of the ELCC, to participate. Via Zoom, Bishops Constanze Hagmaier and Jason Zinko of North America, as well as the Rev. Karen Ressel, companion-synod coordinator and pastor serving on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, met on June 3 with Bishop Ruben Ngozo of the ELCC to share news of how the different nations – the United States, Canada, Oglala Lakota and Cameroon – are coping with COVID-19, and to pray for one another and the world. Shared concerns were lifted up and the parties gave thanks for relationships that sustain us during challenging times.



Left to right: (top row) Bishop Jason Zinko, ELCIC Manitoba/Northwest Ontario; Bishop Constanze Hagmaier, ELCA South Dakota Synod; the Rev. Karen Ressel, companion synod coordinator and pastor serving on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota; (bottom row) the Rev. Ruben Ngozo, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (ELCC); and Anne Langdji, Global Mission regional representative serving in Cameroon. (Photo: Sawyer Vanden Heuvel)

## ELCA Companion Synod Network with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania



The ELCA Companion Synod Network has held two conference calls with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) since the pandemic began. These calls have connected the network to hear stories of Lutheran health care ministry in Tanzania, consider reports on the pandemic inside Tanzania and assess the ELCA's response, both bilaterally (between synod and dioceses) and across Tanzania. The network has also been updated on both the ELCT's and the Tanzanian government's response to the pandemic.

Dr. Stephen and Jodi Swanson's personal protective equipment (PPE) ministry in Arusha, Tanzania.

## **Postponed ELCA-Southern Africa Companion Relationship Consultation**

Because of the pandemic, the first consultation between ELCA synods and companion churches across Southern Africa has been postponed. With the program set, the registration complete and the facilities reserved, the postponement was a difficult decision. Global Mission anticipates holding the consultation in early 2021 but has not yet been able to set specific dates. The Mission Formation team continues to work with synod leadership on developing a resource around the theme of reconciliation, which will be made available for home use. The steering committee, composed of leaders from both Southern African churches and the ELCA, continues to meet to assess the situation and to hear reports about the impact of COVID-19 in their country, church and synod.

## **Delegation Trips to Latin America Are Canceled This Year**

While delegation visits among companions have been canceled this year, companions have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to remaining connected during these difficult times. Expressions of love and solidarity have proliferated as companions come together online to pray for each other and the world.

Also, some synods are supporting the ongoing efforts of their companion churches to assist vulnerable families and communities with food, health kits and prevention trainings on COVID-19.

## **Thank You for Your Service**

This year we say goodbye to two faithful servants of the global work in these companion relationships. After many years of service, dedication and commitment, Pamela May of the Florida-Bahamas Synod and the Rev. Charles Bunk of the South Dakota Synod have ended their global work. On behalf of the Companion Synod program, we at Global Mission express our deepest gratitude for their leadership and contributions. Their remarkable ministries have strengthened our companion relationships and the global work of this church.

## **Revised Companion Synod Listings**

The Companion Synod listings have been revised recently. “Companion Synod Relationships by Country” and “Companion Synod Relationships by Synod” are now posted on Global Mission’s resource page, under the “Companions” tab, at [ELCA.org/Resources/Global-Mission](https://www.elca.org/Resources/Global-Mission). Please share this resource!



The ELCA's Global Mission unit continues to work alongside companions and partners as they meet development and disaster response needs in a world where poverty is on the rise due to the global pandemic. In 2020, we anticipate providing more than **\$14 million from our ELCA World Hunger funds to support 223 grants in 60 countries.** In addition to projects in health, HIV/AIDS, migration, sustainable development and climate change, we are thrilled to share that four out of five new ELCA World Hunger projects center on gender justice. Additionally, Global Mission is allocating approximately **\$1.5 million from Lutheran Disaster Response to respond to the COVID-19** pandemic in addition to other, more localized disasters. Since the outbreak first began, **Global Mission has supported 52 responses in 35 countries around the world**, plus five global responses, that address a wide range of needs, from supplying personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical equipment to providing food and other necessities to WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and awareness education.

## St. Andrew's Refugee Services

In companionship with the ELCA's Global Mission unit, St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) in Cairo, Egypt, works with refugees to enhance their quality of life and meet unaddressed needs. With regular grant support from ELCA World Hunger, StARS provides high-quality services and offers a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which refugees can exercise their rights, pursue their aspirations and live with dignity. Refugees in Egypt come from many countries, including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought on more challenges for refugees. They often work in the informal sector, and business restrictions during the pandemic have affected the livelihood of many refugees. In some cases, they are refused health care or have even been blamed for spreading the virus. StARS has been able to adapt regular programming to continue to provide quality services – for example, providing psychosocial support by phone rather than in person. As part of Lutheran Disaster Response's COVID-19 response, StARS was awarded an additional grant to distribute multipurpose cash payouts to families whose livelihoods have been impacted by the pandemic, and to supply the most vulnerable refugees with hygiene boxes and food.

During the government lockdown, StARS reached out to Sayyida Ezz el-Deen, a Yemeni mother of two



A woman receives her psychoeducational package from Groups and Activities Programs. (Photo: Eihab Idriss/StARS)

children with special needs, aged 4 and 10. When asked about the assistance she received, el-Deen replied, "I am very happy and appreciative of StARS for making these creative activities that can be done at home. Simple things such as food preparation and making play dough are easy, do not cost a lot and help my children learn while also helping me out at the house."

Organizations such as StARS are crucial in assisting refugees now, and support from the ELCA's Global Mission unit is making a profound impact on their lives.

## **Lutheran World Service India Trust**

Since 2012, Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT) has run a Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH) program with the support of the West Bengal government's Department of Women & Child Development and Social Welfare. Eighty residents (40 women and 40 men) reside in two blocks within the city of Kolkata. As part of the church's COVID-19 response, Lutheran Disaster Response provided LWSIT with a grant to care for residents by providing food, masks, and personal hygiene supplies and sanitation materials.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, 72-year-old Shyamapada Chatterjee worked for a shop in exchange for food. When the nationwide lockdown began, the shop closed, and Chatterjee no longer had access to food. A local policeman found him lying on a railway platform with a fever and a cough and brought him to the SUH on March 26. When Chatterjee arrived at the shelter, he couldn't remember his own identity. He received a preliminary health checkup by the medical practitioner and then moved into the shelter for rest. Now Chatterjee eats four times a day and receives the utmost care from the support staff of LWSIT. Thanks to the grant from Lutheran Disaster Response, he was also supplied with personal hygiene and sanitation materials, including a mask. Additionally, medicine was provided to help him recover from the cough and cold. He is living safely with other residents at the SUH.



# Mission Formation

Three teams have been combined to form a new team in the Global Mission unit. The International Leaders Program, Global Service and Mission Formation teams now compose the Mission Formation for Global Leadership and Service team. Under the leadership of Tammy Jackson, senior director for Mission Formation, Leadership and Global Service, this team is beginning to take shape. In this edition of Global Mission Updates, you will see the reports from the new team.

## A Mission Formation Vision Statement

The following vision statement for the future of Mission Formation was issued by the Mission Formation Visioning Consultation in December 2019. For a full report and analysis, contact Kevin Jacobson at [Kevin.Jacobson@elca.org](mailto:Kevin.Jacobson@elca.org).

*“Mission Formation uses the common language, methodology and praxis of accompaniment to equip the ELCA to engage in healthy, sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships with people in both local and global contexts. This lived representation of the transformative and disruptive power of the gospel becomes a living curriculum with a distinctive local character that celebrates diverse expressions of worship and service and breaks down unjust systems of power. As we walk together, the challenges created by this work will need humble spiritual reflection and application of Scripture in order to create an ongoing invitation into dynamic, life-giving relationship with God and each other.”*

## Missionary Panel Discussions

Mission Formation recently hosted the panel discussion “ELCA’s Global Mission Responding: COVID-19.” The discussion was designed to explore the social, economic and political implications of the public health responses. This was an opportunity to raise awareness that Global Mission’s responses and strategies translate across regions as we assess needs and provide support. Mission Formation plans to move forward with a series of webinar-based symposia. Discussions will connect the current pandemic to themes such as theology, law, immigration, environmental justice and post-pandemic well-being. Global Mission’s values of accompaniment will guide the Mission Formation team as we support and learn from our companions.



Global Mission staff and missionaries take part in a panel discussion on the ELCA’s coordinated response to COVID-19.

## Global Companion Prayer Service

Under the theme “For the Healing of the Nations,” on the Feast of Pentecost Sunday, May 31, the Mission Formation team hosted the Global Companion Prayer Service. Beginning at 6 a.m. with our Asia-Pacific companions and concluding at 7 p.m. with friends from Latin America and the Caribbean, the five services drew over 400 people, often with several people gathered around a virtual platform. The prayer service was written by the Rev. Susan Briehl and created by Tom Witt and Mary Preuss; a special thank-you goes to Alison Gomulka for handling the technology. Together, we recognized the anxiety in the world that stresses our relationships and called for God’s hope, comfort, peace and solace to be with Christ’s people through these long and difficult days of COVID-19.

# International Leaders Program

## International Women Leaders Graduates

Early summer is always a time of joy for the International Leaders Program as scholarship recipients graduate from their ELCA-supported academic programs. Along with the companion churches that sent these scholars, International Leaders gives thanks for the generosity of ELCA members who faithfully fund these awards year after year.

International Leaders is especially grateful this year to mark the second graduating class from the International Women Leaders (IWL) program, a special scholarship fund for young women from companion churches to earn bachelor's degrees from ELCA colleges and universities. Join us in celebrating the IWL Class of 2020!



**SOPHIA CHUNG**, from the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM), graduated from Lenoir-Rhyne University with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and studio art.

*“We are each confronted by pressing issues within our culture and society. We must each identify our role in shaping the future and the change we hope to see.”*

**LONEY DEBULLY**, from the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM), graduated from Wartburg College with a Bachelor of Arts in business administration and management.

*“My dream is to improve the education system back home, to give everyone the opportunity to study, especially those children that live in rural places.”*







**HESTER FOO**, from the Lutheran Church in Malaysia (LCM), graduated from Newberry College with a Bachelor of Science in graphic design and digital marketing.

*“The International Women Leaders initiative gave me a chance to study in the U.S., and I will always be grateful for that. This initiative shows me that women, too, can be leaders and that we should fight for gender justice.”*



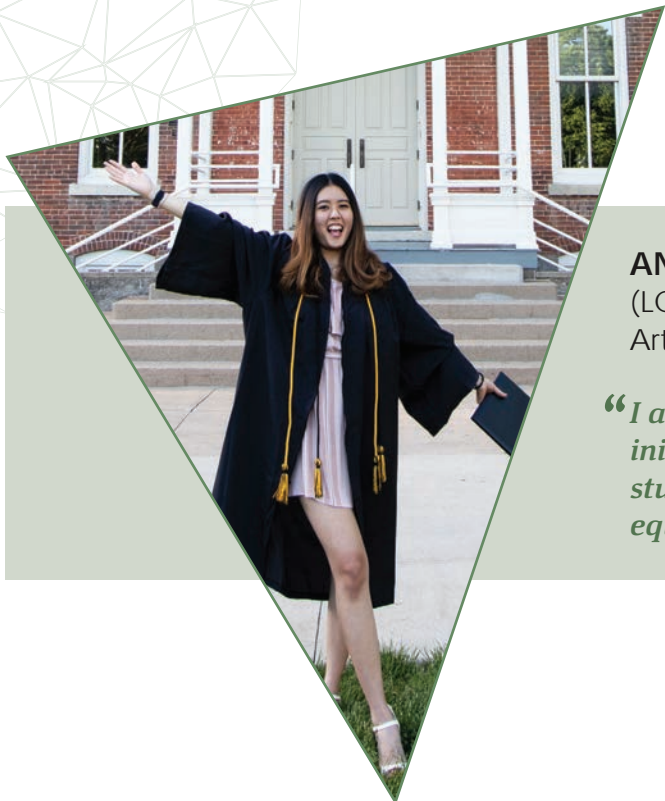
**FAYE LEE**, from the Lutheran Church in Malaysia (LCM), graduated from Luther College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in international studies.

*“The International Women Leaders initiative has given me a brand-new lens to reflect on the world around me and on myself.”*



**PHEPHILE NDLOVU**, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ), graduated from Wartburg College with a Bachelor of Arts in business administration and finance.

*“Growing up in an environment where certain roles and duties define a woman has awakened and motivated me to learn more about gender justice and realize the power that we women have in society.”*



**ANGELINE NEO**, from the Lutheran Church in Malaysia (LCM), graduated from Wartburg College with a Bachelor of Arts in art and graphic design.

*“I am so grateful that the International Women Leaders initiative has allowed me to pursue my dream, being able to study what I am passionate in. When I return home, I will be equipped to serve and lead the church in different ministries.”*



**AMANDA WILLIAM**, from the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM), graduated from Augsburg University with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology.

*“They say if you want to dream, dream big. I am very certain that women can build a better future for the coming generations.”*

The IWL program will welcome up to five new students this coming academic year. The 2020 scholarship awards have been offered to excellent applicants from Brazil, Nicaragua, Poland, The Gambia and Zambia. These incoming scholars will join 21 continuing IWL students in the fall.

We remain grateful for the financial partnership and hospitality of our ELCA college and university collaborators. Current IWL partner schools include Augsburg University, California Lutheran University, Concordia College, Gustavus Adolphus College, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Luther College, Newberry College, St. Olaf College, Texas Lutheran University, Wartburg College and Wittenberg University.

## **Deployment of New Missionaries**

The Global Mission unit has prudently decided to delay the sending of new missionaries during summer 2020, with a few exceptions. The ELCA will continue to send teachers to participate in the Japan ESL Teacher program. Additionally, the ELCA will deploy two Horizon International interns this year: one to a congregation in Argentina and the other to a congregation in Malaysia. The New Mission Personnel Orientation was held virtually this summer. We ask that you keep all our missionaries and our companions in your prayers during this time.

## **Home Assignment and Summer Missionary Conference Updates**

As we continually live into the new realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Mission unit has decided to cancel in-person missionary home assignment visits and the Summer Missionary Conference for summer 2020. These decisions were made early in the response to COVID-19 as travel restrictions increased and the ELCA prioritized the health of missionaries and the congregations they would have been visiting. Because many congregations enjoy receiving missionaries on a biennial basis, the ELCA is asking those missionaries scheduled for home assignment to participate online. During this time, Global Mission realizes that many congregations are holding services or other meetings online, and missionaries could very easily connect with their sponsoring communities. We at Global Mission are working with our colleagues in Mission Advancement to encourage congregations and missionaries to reach out to each other and find ways to have meaningful connection.

## Young Adults in Global Mission

### **Ending of Young Adults in Global Mission Service Year**

As many organizations and programs responded to COVID-19, Global Mission took careful steps to consider what was best for its volunteers, hosts and companions, and our global community. The decision was made to bring home all active Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) volunteers from all country programs, ending their year of service early. This decision was made both for the safety of volunteers and staff but also out of respect for Global Mission's partners and hosts. Returned volunteers were granted a one-time reentry grant of \$1,000, and each volunteer was offered up to six reimbursable therapy sessions.

### **Cancellation of Service Year for 2020-2021 YAGM Volunteers**

The YAGM program has decided not to send its 2020-2021 cohort of volunteers, who were already in the process of being placed for their pending service year. The YAGM program is a foundational and meaningful program for the ELCA and its companions, and as such, YAGM country coordinators and the Global Service team will continue working to strengthen the program for the future of ministry together. All volunteers who were accepted into the program will be granted priority status (first consideration) in next year's placement process if they choose to pursue a year of service with YAGM again.



## What Is the Plan for the YAGM Program During This Time?

YAGM will undergo a program-wide evaluation in this time of sabbath between years of service, during which training and recruitment procedures will be scrutinized and updated. Country coordinators will continue to work with companions in deepening their work and relationship for further growth of their respective country programs, as well as strengthening their continuing education efforts for their own ministry in regard to the YAGM program. Chicago-based staff will continue to work on resources and trainings to better equip YAGM staff and the work of recruitment, in anticipation of the recruitment and candidate season in the fall.

## Postponement of the YAGM 20th Anniversary Celebration

Due to the pandemic, YAGM decided to postpone the 20th anniversary celebration originally scheduled for May 29-31, 2020. The event will be rescheduled in 2021, with a finalized date to be announced. YAGM mourns the impact of this pandemic on our world and prays for all who are affected. YAGM is eager to gather with alums in 2021 at a time when doing so is safe and prudent. YAGM alums have been invited to participate in planning the anniversary celebration in 2021. Those interested should email Dan Beirne and Samantha Ea at [Dan.Beirne@elca.org](mailto:Dan.Beirne@elca.org) and [Samantha.Ea@elca.org](mailto:Samantha.Ea@elca.org).

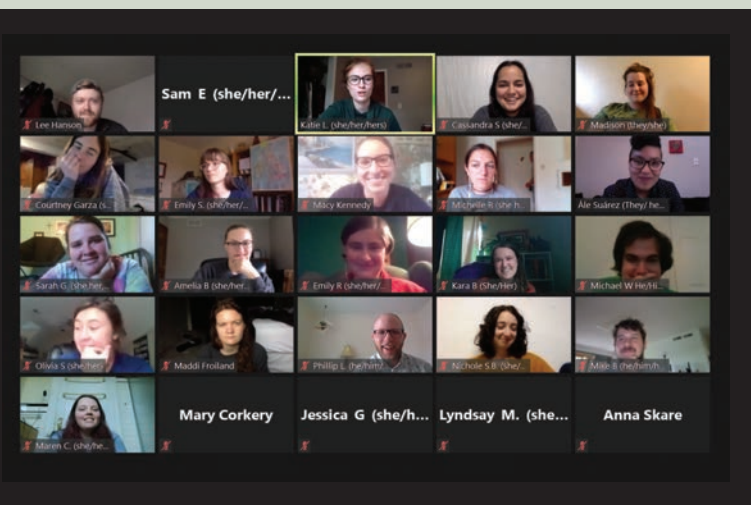
## Short-term Recruiters — Fall 2020

This fall, YAGM will have four short-term recruiters for the 2021-2022 YAGM program year: Kara Barkman, Kendra Hernandez, Olivia Slagle and Jayme Kokkonen, covering the West Coast, Southwest/Rocky Mountain, East Coast and Midwest recruitment regions along with any additional cities or places that seem fitting.

As part of the YAGM program's continued call to address the institutional racism of what has been a majority-white program, a new recruitment structure is being implemented for this year's recruiting cycle. Quarterly recruiters, as they are called, are YAGM alums on stipends who will spend time in racially and ethnically specific communities under the guidance of our Domestic Mission unit. This new recruitment model is based on the premise that YAGM, as an overwhelmingly white program, lacks the relational capital to enter racially or ethnically specific communities that it has not known, with leaders whom it has not previously engaged, and extend an invitation to participate in YAGM. It is necessary, first, to spend time in a community, build relationships with community members and establish trust with community leaders. Quarterly recruiters will spend time in these communities at the invitation of our Domestic Mission colleagues and begin building these relationships.

## YAGM Weekend Virtual Retreat

In collaboration with Mission Formation, YAGM alums and Glocal Musicians, the YAGM program hosted a weekend virtual retreat for the 2019-2020 YAGM volunteers. The retreat consisted of guest speakers from the Malaysia 2013-2014 YAGM (a country program that had to end its program year early); a wellness session led by therapists; art therapy exercises and practices; and healing worship sessions that bookended the day-and-a-half event. The virtual event was well attended and well received. This was the first virtual retreat the YAGM program ever curated.



2019-2020 YAGM volunteers who had to return from their year of service early participate in a virtual retreat.

# Contact Us

---

For more information about Global Mission, please contact any manager for relationships.

## **Africa**

*Vacant*

East and Southern Africa

Cynthia Zamora

Madagascar, West and Central Africa

Cynthia.Zamora@elca.org

## **Asia and the Pacific**

Cynthia Zamora

Cynthia.Zamora@elca.org

## **Europe, Middle East and North Africa**

Johanna Olson

Johanna.Olson@elca.org

## **Latin America and the Caribbean**

Paulina Dasse

Paulina.Dasse@elca.org

## **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Global Mission unit**

1-800-638-3522

8765 W. Higgins Road

Chicago, IL 60631-4101

## **Credits**

Content Managers: Cynthia Zamora, Johanna Olson, Paulina Dasse, Kevin Jacobson (Global Mission)

Project Manager: Cat Knarr (Mission Advancement)

Design and Layout: Karen Dersnah (Mission Advancement)

Copy Editor: James Jones (Mission Advancement)



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