

Story behind Global Mission Quilt Banner

When considering what they could do for Global Mission Sunday this year, some of the women of Grace Lutheran Church, Tallahassee first thought of making a poster. But then they teamed with Pastor Jennifer Kopacz and her mother, PJ May, Chair of the FB Synod Global Mission Committee – and the Grace Quilt Group – and ended up with a stunning quilted banner with photos highlighting some of the projects of the Synod's Companion Churches and seminary. The photo for Haiti shows a group gathered outside of Faith Lutheran Church in Fond des Negres (where Peace Lutheran Church of Fort Myers replaced the roof this past January). For Surinam, they chose a photo of the recently renovated Martin Luther Kierke in Paramaribou. The yellow school bus marked "Pastors for Peace Friendshipment" used for transporting the FB Synod mission group in Havana in 2015 was chosen for Cuba. Some of Guyana's Lutheran Music Academy students are pictured in the bottom right. Lastly, a photo of one of the buildings at the United Theological College of the West Indies represents our supportive relationship there.



The other fabric pieces making up the quilt were left over from other quilts the group has made – including some fabric from Nigeria that quilter Pris Craw was given when she went to Nigeria in 2011 for a Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) Jubilee celebration. As it turns out, Pris and another quilter have some interesting global mission connections! Both Pris and Priscilla Heidorn grew up in Buffalo NY, went to nursing school and then midwifery training at Frontier Nursing University in Kentucky. From there, their lives took different courses.

Pris recalls that the "missionary bug" hit her early in her youth with her grandfather as President of the English District of the LCMS in Buffalo. "We used to have missionaries on furlough in the states stay with us all the time. Their stories inspired me to think about doing mission work." She received her Bachelor's degree in nursing from Hartwick College and worked and lived at home for a year following graduation to get more clinical experience. "I soon realized that regular hospital nursing was not for me. I needed something more." She went to Frontier – initially working for 9 months "doing district work" before being enrolled in the midwifery class – which at the time took only 6 months to finish. While there, she met other nurses who had been serving as medical missionaries in Nigeria but had been evacuated back to the states for training during the Biafran War (1967- 1970). When it was finally safe to return, Pris made the decision to go with them. She recalls "I worked under several different international Red Cross agencies at these medical clinics and feeding stations where we would see thousands of people a day. I did just about everything *except* deliver babies!" Pris stayed for 5 years and eventually had to return home due to illness. She returned to Frontier to get back her midwifery skills and ended up in Thomasville, Georgia where she worked as a midwife. Pris has been to Haiti 5 times to do midwifery training.

Attending the installation of a pastor was the last place Priscilla Heidorn and her husband, Mark, expected to run into her childhood friend from Buffalo. Priscilla says her interest in the medical field came from her father, who was a physician. She received her nursing degree from the University of Buffalo and then she went to Frontier for her midwifery training. She was assigned to Papua New Guinea (PNG) through the Medical Missions of the LCMS. While there, she met and married her husband, Mark, who was there, also through LCMS, as a teacher. They stayed a total of ten years in PNG. They returned to the states and moved to Tallahassee for Mark to continue his education, and then to Thomasville, Georgia. They remained active in the church and so it was natural for them to think of attending the

installation of a new pastor. It was a joyful surprise to meet up again with Pris and catch up on their experiences. Pris and Priscilla ended up working together as midwives in Thomasville for 22 years. They even went to Haiti together to teach local midwives there – using a program of pictures and demonstrations that was developed by a coworker of Pris in Nigeria.

Priscilla and Mark celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this year in a special way. In April they returned to Papua New Guinea – “for the first time in 42 years”. While there, Priscilla said “We spent time with the General Secretary of the Gutnius Lutheran Church, a man whose father was someone I trained to work with us in the clinics. I attended this church official’s mother while she gave birth to him. He holds me in great esteem – as if I was the one who had to work so hard to give him life! It was such an honor and joy to spend time with him on our return trip. It made the trip so worthwhile and we are so glad we went.”

Currently, Pris, Mark and Priscilla, are active members of Grace Lutheran Church in Tallahassee where Pastor Jennifer Kopacz has been serving as pastor for just over a year. Last year the congregation donated over \$800 on Global Mission Sunday. They hope the quilt banner with its colorful depictions of the FB Synod’s companion relationships provides the inspiration to give even more this year!

Global Mission Updates

CUBA

Pr. Russell Meyer, Pr. Jaime Dubon, Pr. Larry Boudon and engineer Noah Trinklein (Calvary, Apollo Beach) recently made a 5 day trip to Cuba and the Isle of Youth to see the progress on the “La Finca” project, discuss the potential for a Lay Leadership Program (in Spanish), and develop the scope of a potential project for renovating St. Matthew’s Church in Crocodrillo (pictured right).



Depending on the engineer’s report, a discussion of logistics and estimated costs, the Global Mission Committee will consider a renovation project that will provide an opportunity for participation in work mission trip(s) in one of the most beautiful and pristine fishing villages in Cuba.

Pr. Meyer and Tonya LaBarbera are co-chairs of the Cuba Mission Team.

GUYANA/SURINAME

The South American countries of Guyana and Suriname not only share a border and a common strong Lutheran heritage, but are joined in one sub-committee of the Global Mission Committee headed up by Pr. Tom Unrath. Pr. Unrath and GMC member Chris Klafs, have taken several groups to both Guyana and Suriname.

ELCA Missionary to Suriname, Pr. Kevin Jacobsen announced in October that he is returning to the states after 8 years in the mission field. He will be working for Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services in Baltimore, MD.

Advent Devotional Booklets from Guyana

The Global Mission Committee is once again grateful to receive the gift of Advent Devotional booklets written by the clergy and Deacons of the ELCG. Sister Shirley Jaundoo sends them to us electronically and they are distributed to congregations here to be printed and given for members to use.

Some congregations use this as a fund raising project – asking for a suggested \$5 donation for each booklet. This money is then returned to the ELCG for their Sunday School fund. If your congregation would like to receive the Devotional booklet template, please email Pr. Ron Will at willway1@mindspring.com.

Ordinations in Suriname

We rejoice with our brothers and sisters in Suriname as they ordain Danielle Dokman and Urwin Holband on November 6th.

Pr. Tom Unrath is leading a small group to Suriname to attend the ordination service for Danielle Dokman and Urwin Holband and will be participating in the service. Danielle graduated from the United Theological College of the West Indies in May this year. Urwin is a graduate of the Moravian Seminary in Suriname.

Following several days in Suriname and visiting congregations there, the Pr. Unrath and his group will travel to Guyana and visit congregations there.

WELCA Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) to host 2 guests from Suriname at Lake Yale Conference

This year's Lake Yale Conference will be a "Glocal Event" in more ways than one! The ELCA Glocal musicians will be leading the worship services. The workshops and presentations will be on the theme of Global Mission, featuring the FB Synod Companion Churches and other countries. In addition, the Global Mission Committee and the SWO have teamed up to sponsor 2 women from Suriname to be a part of the Conference.

This is not the first time there has been a women's group exchange. In 2014, 2 women came from Guyana and attended the Lake Yale Conference. In August 2015, Chris Klafs, Marcee Strickland and Kathy Hofer attended the ELCG Women's Assembly in Guyana.

These exchanges are important activities that deepen our understanding and appreciation of our respective cultures and church work. The Global Mission Committee is grateful for the commitment of the SWO in pursuing and supporting these opportunities.

HAITI

Most of us are aware of the devastation, death, and destruction left in Haiti by Hurricane Matthew. We are still waiting on a report from ELH President Livenson Lavaunas on the extent of the damage to churches and communities in the south and western areas of the island.

What we do know is that Lutheran Disaster Relief and Lutheran World Relief were on the ground and delivering help and assistance within days of the storm and as soon as roads were made passable. The FB Synod GMC responded to Pr. Livenson's request for help with money for tires and maintenance and gas for a vehicle to be able to travel to the affected regions.

We ask for congregations to continue to pray for the people of Haiti and our Companion Church members. Donations for either the Vehicle Maintenance Fund or Hurricane Relief can be sent to the FB Synod offices at 3838 W. Cypress Street, Tampa, FL 33607.

Donations for Lutheran Disaster Relief can be done online through the ELCA website.

Newest Lutheran in Haiti

President Livenson and his wife Rose are the proud parents of son Lisandro Johnson Lauvanus, born in Port au Prince, Haiti on October 16th. All are doing well.



Global Mission Fundraising continues through November

Donations for the 3 projects that were included in the Global Mission Race on display at the Synod Assembly in June are still being tabulated as this issue goes to press. At the end of the Assembly, “La Finca” was ahead with a total of \$3000. The parsonage renovation in Suriname was second (\$1100) and the Vehicle Maintenance Fund for Haiti was in third place with just under \$1000 raised. First prize of \$500 (from an anonymous donor) goes to the project that reaches the goal of \$5000 first.

The first Sunday in October was the Synod-wide Global Mission Day and many churches had presentations, temple talks, poster displays, international food and coffee sales, and special collections. Other congregations decided to celebrate all month long, and still others are planning to observe Global Mission Sunday in November.

The other goal of this year’s fundraiser was to double the number of congregations in the Synod who participate by donating. A full report of the amount raised, the winner of the race, and the number of congregations who participated will be in January’s newsletter issue.

Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGMs)

Please be sure to check out the Synod website and the YAGM section to read about the three YAGMs from the Florida-Bahamas Synod!

Becca Williams (St. Stephen, Tallahassee) is serving in England, Ben Smith (Vero Beach) is in Madagascar. Kyle Marie Jacobsen grew up in Panama City, FL and entered the YAGM program through Redeemer Lutheran Church and the Campus Ministry program at Georgia Tech. She is serving in Cambodia. Both Becca and Kyle have blogs that you can access and read about their experiences and reflections. Ben will be writing a newsletter that will be posted on the website.

Please include these young people in your devotions and prayers for a safe and meaningful experience with their host families and work sites.

Contacts for Global Mission

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Please submit stories/articles/photos to PJ May for January issue by December 15th.