

Florida Bahamas Synod Global Mission Updates



This painting of the “Road to Emmaus”, which hangs in the lobby of the Lutheran Center in Chicago – helps us to understand where we have a Biblical basis for the model of “accompaniment” in our Companion Synod-church relationships. “In this Easter story of friends walking on the road to Emmaus we see how God, the risen Christ, walks with us. The images of the disciples on the road, the accompanying stranger, the dialogue and retelling of scripture, the extending of hospitality and a meal, and finally, the revelation of Christ in the breaking of bread – all show what can happen when we walk with one another, together, in God’s mission.”

ELCA Companion Synods Handbook, 2006



ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton with Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELH) President Livenson Lauvanus, ELCA Consultant Jim Noss, and Florida Bahamas Synod Global Mission Committee Chair, PJ May in Chicago, February 18.

Thanks to Emmanuel, Naples and Emmanuel, Venice – ELH President Livenson Lauvanus was able to spend almost 3 weeks in the Florida Bahamas Synod making new connections and visiting supporting congregations (Hope, The Villages and Nativity, Weeki Wachee) and conferences (Space Coast). He also spent time meeting with Bishop Suarez and Conference Deans at their retreat at Luther Springs. Pr. Livenson extended his stay to be able to accept an invitation from Pr. Jaime Dubon, Area Program Director for Latin America and the Caribbean ELCA-Global Mission, to fly to Chicago and discuss how the ELCA and FB Synod can more closely accompany the ELH this year and into the future.

Jim Noss, former ELCA missionary, who has already been working with the ELH, and PJ May, Chair of the FB Synod Global Mission Committee, also arranged to attend the meeting which was moderated by Paulina Dasse, Manager of Companion Relationships for Latin America and the Caribbean.



While the ELH has been working on increasing their institutional capacity the last year with a grant from the Together in Mission (TiM) fund of the FB Synod, they will need to step this up significantly this year due to changes to the ELCA Grant process and requirements for accountability and reporting. The ELCA Global Mission unit has granted the ELH \$10,000 this year for both Leadership Development and Capacity Building to help the ELH be able to meet the new standards. The result of the meeting in Chicago led to a clear understanding and commitments from all parties as to how we will accompany each other on this path.



The ELCA is unique among all other denominations in the world in its approach and support of global relationships among Lutheran churches and organizations. The ELH and the FB Synod are grateful for the opportunity to deepen their relationship with the support of the ELCA Global Mission Unit.

Haiti Task Force Chair, Anita Unrath and Special Consultant Jim Noss made a visit to Haiti the end of January. They were able to check in on several ongoing and completed projects and visited the Lutheran Center in Gressier. Anita also met with Jean-Robert who will be helping with coordinating future Immersion Journeys to Haiti in the future.

Below – Church members outside the Community Center in Savanne-Zombie where the above ground cistern has been completed – providing potable water for a community of 6000.

LIFE GIVING WATER.....

Water Giving Life!



At Living Waters Lutheran Church in North Port, Global Mission Committee member Gayle Backiel worked with the Church Council and Fellowship Committee to have a Multi-Cultural Event as a fund raiser for our Companion churches in the Caribbean. Five countries were represented with pictures and other decorations and lots of food and drink inspired by the culture, landscape, history and festivals of their country. Forty-five members attended the event and raised \$248.00 for Global Mission that was sent into the Synod.



Gayle Nelson – a member of Faith Lutheran Church, Tampa, recently sent her last newsletter from Kumamoto City, Japan – where she has been serving a 3 year term as ELCA Missionary. She has been attending Kuwamizu Japanese Lutheran Church and conducting Bible Studies and assisting with worship services both there and at the International Services in the evening. During the week Gayle was teaching “Presentation English” - how to write in English and how to present in English – to students at Luther High School (pictured to the right).



Naturally, Gayle is finding it hard to leave her new-found friends and family however, she is eager to return home this month and meet her granddaughter, Savannah Isabelle, who was born last fall.

YAGM Stephen Bryant writes about “Accompaniment”



I want to share a portion of what Stephen wrote about accompaniment just last week. He had been invited to a wedding of a woman who was getting married for the second time. He remembered meeting her only twice, neither time remarkable to him, but she remembered him and what he had taught her and it enabled her to escape an abusive marriage. She invited him to the wedding because she saw his work as being a part of her new freedom.

Stephen writes: “Accompaniment is so much more than I initially thought. I recognized that I was accompanying people, and they were accompanying me. At its core, accompaniment is solidarity, mutuality, and interdependence. I am here because the ELCA is committed to accompanying the Lutheran Church in Rwanda. My accompanying the people here is an extension of that commitment. In turn, through my being accompanied here by various communities, I have learned so much about generosity, privilege, love, and humility. I am extremely grateful for all those walking alongside me in my community, and I am beginning to see the depth of how beautifully interwoven each of our lives are with each other’s.”

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