

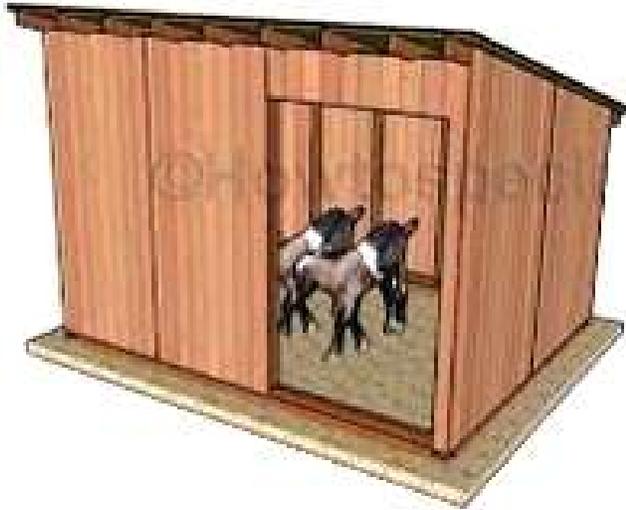


Global Mission: Walking together in all kinds of weather

We are already well into 2022 and entering the third year of living with Covid. While some parts of the world are re-engaging with in-person activities and relaxed restrictions, others continue to struggle with the coronavirus. Learning and understanding the context of each other's lives is a core tenet of accompaniment, the

model that guides the work of Global Mission. It is an engagement for *the long haul*, as we walk with each other through times of hardship as well as ease. In this issue of the Global Mission Table newsletter, we look at the blessings of being in long-term relationship — walking together, in all kinds of weather.

With support from the Florida-Bahamas Synod, the Lutheran Church in Haiti and member families are embarking on a new goat farming project.



An artists' sketch of a shelter to be built to house male goats at a church in Les Cayes, Haiti.

See story, page 3.

Global Mission Table at Synod Assembly

An in-person Synod Assembly has been scheduled for 2022, June 3-5 at the Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando. "Joyful Patient Faithful" is the theme. Because of Covid, the 2020 assembly was canceled and the 2021 one was virtual via Zoom.

The Global Mission Table will be present — perhaps a workshop, probably a display table, definitely Pastor Katie Carroll and others from our Global Mission teams on hand.

It will be an opportunity to learn first-hand about our ministry with our companions, and how you and your congregation can get involved!

Companions collaborate again for a Gender Justice video

Once again in 2021, the Florida-Bahamas Synod joined with its companions in late November and early December to observe the "16 Days of Activism for Gender Justice." While we encounter beautiful diversity among our various companions, we tragically share in the all-too-common reality of gender-based violence.

Members of the Guyana-Suriname Team joined together with the Evangelical Lutheran Kierke

in Suriname (ELKS), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana (ELCG) and the Iglesia Evangélica Unida-Sínodo Luterano (IEU-SL) in Cuba to create a video devotion. It includes prayer, reading, live music and a reflection on how the story of the Good Samaritan might have been different. All connect to the theme of gender justice.

The 16 Days observance begins on Nov. 25, designated by the
(Please turn to page 2)



Marcee Wilkes reads the gospel story of the Good Samaritan.

GLOBAL MISSION TABLE TEAM LEADERS

This newsletter and information from weekly E-Spirit mailings out of the Florida-Bahamas Synod office and other sources give you a virtual view of what it means here in our synod to be in a companion relationship with Lutheran church bodies in the Caribbean. Perhaps the idea has occurred to you to get involved in that walk yourself with one of the churches. Here's the first step: Reach out to the Global Mission Table Team Leader of that church body and ask some questions. Here's who, and how. The when is up to you, but know this: All are waiting to hear from you.



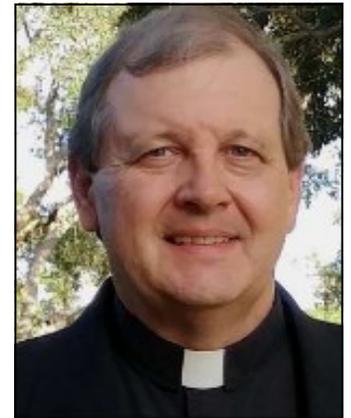
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See the 2021 Gender Justice video on our synod website

(Continued from page 1)

United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and ends on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day.

To view the video, go to <https://fbsynod.com/mission-ministry/global-mission-information/>. Scroll down to the YouTube video frame showing Pastor Katie Carroll that's immediately after the "Welcome to Global Mission" image.

The 17-minute video was offered on the closing day of the 2021 observance. It opens with Rafael van Ommeren, a Suriname seminarian, singing, in Spanish and English, "Cuando el Pobre / When the Poor Ones," accompanying himself on keyboard. Then Pastor Danielle Dokman, a Suriname pastor, introduces the 16 Days theme. She is followed by Marcee Wilkes, Global Mis-

sion Table Suriname and Guyana Team leader, reading the gospel account of the Good Samaritan.

Pastor Katie then reflects on how the Good Samaritan story might be different if a woman were involved. This is followed by prayers by Cuba's Yamilka Hernandez Guzman in Spanish, and the FB Synod's Donna Cobos in English. The video concludes with a sung blessing and a rousing gospel sendoff by a choir in Guyana.

To see two 2020 Gender Justice videos produced by the companions, scroll a bit farther down to the section with a blue background. On the right is text that ends with two links marked "here" and "here." Click on both.



Gender Justice 2021 video participants, from left: Cuba's Yamilka Hernandez Guzman, Suriname's Pastor Danielle Dokman and Rafael van Ommeren, FB Synod's Donna Cobos

HAITI REPORT

Earthquake relief includes school items for 500 students

Although our ties are close and we are in frequent touch, the Haiti Team is still not able to travel to visit our brothers and sisters in the Eglise Luthérienne d’Haiti (ELH).

Political unrest continues to plague the country; further, although reported Covid cases have declined, the vaccination rate is at about 1 percent.

Walking together has meant recognizing that ELH’s top priority is to bring healing and hope to victims of the 7.2-magnitude earthquake that occurred last August. The Florida-Bahamas Synod responded with great generosity and compassion to a special Haiti Earthquake Disaster Fund appeal that raised over \$50,000.

A significant portion of the disaster fund has been spent. Last fall, \$22,000 was sent to Haiti. As reported in the most recent Global Mission Table newsletter, it provided emergency food relief to devastated areas.

In January 2022, a \$20,000 grant was forwarded to ELH to secure school supplies for children. Schools, closed since the earthquake in August, are only now re-opening.

Thanks to the partnership between the Florida-Bahamas Synod and the ELH, 500 children and youths obtained backpacks, paper, pencils and more as they returned to classes. The photos here show distribution of some of these gifts.



As schools that had been closed since last August’s earthquake began reopening recently, 500 Haitian schoolchildren received backpacks with school supplies, thanks to a grant to the Lutheran Church of Haiti from the Florida-Bahamas Synod.

Updated project getting under way for families to raise goats

What’s next for the church in Haiti in our journey together?

As we move beyond immediate disaster relief, the Global Mission value of *empowerment* becomes a guiding principle for our work together.

The Lutheran Church of Haiti (ELH) seeks to strengthen communities by offering resources to build livelihoods. The Global Mission Table is partnering with the church in a project that provides families with goats for milking, breeding and selling.

A similar project was undertaken in 2019 with some success; lessons learned from the experience are being applied to this second effort. It begins with a pilot program being launched in Les Cayes. Once it is up and running smoothly, ELH will replicate the initiative in other communities.

Each participating family will receive a female goat to take care of at their home, while four male goats will be maintained by the church for breeding. An agronomist who is a member of the congregation in Les

Cayes will monitor the health of all the goats to see that they receive proper immunization and care.

This is a long-term project that will be rolled out over time. The first step is to build a shelter to house the male goats at the church. Meanwhile, participating families will construct their own shelters and fencing for their goat and the anticipated growing herd.

The male goats will be sourced from South America; the female goats will be acquired locally in Haiti.

JAMAICA REPORT

Seminary virtual courses open to anyone interested

Amid the challenges of Covid, the United Theological College of the West Indies has maintained its commitment to provide theological education in the Caribbean. Covid infections in Jamaica are falling. The vaccination rate stands at about 23 percent.

Although some students are on campus attending classes in person, the school is expanding its online presence with virtual coursework.



*UTCWI professor
Carolyn Schneider*

The Global Mission Table is walking alongside UTCWI as it develops new strategies to help secure a vibrant future.

There is one Lutheran student at UTCWI, from our companion Evangelical Lutheran Kierke in Suriname (he was profiled in our fall 2021 newsletter). The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America sponsors a Lutheran professor in

residence on the college faculty, Dr. Carolyn Schneider. Along with other duties at the school, Dr. Schneider provides the Lutheran instruction to all Lutheran students who enroll at UTCWI.

Virtual courses are open to both degree-seeking students and anyone else interested in furthering their theological knowledge. If you are interested in learning more about online study opportunities through UTCWI, contact Jamaica Team leader Judy Olsen at jl13905al@gmail.com, or Rev. Katie Carroll, Global Mission chair, at revkhc@gmail.com.

What does it mean to be in accompaniment with others?

Throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, synods are called upon to develop relationships with their companion churches embodying the accompaniment model. What does this mean?

Literally, to accompany means to walk side by side. We seek to develop mutual relationships in which we value the gifts, strengths and skills of our companions. Rather than assuming the lead and dominant position, we take time to listen to our companions. We learn the

We learn the priorities of companion churches and interact with them as fellow workers.

priorities of the companion churches and interact with them as fellow workers, sharing and learning from one another in mutual respect.

In the accompaniment model, receiving is as important as sending or giving. Companions who walk together in accompaniment focus on recognizing and embracing one another's gifts. Being open to, and appre-

ciative of, the gifts of companions is a hallmark of accompaniment and the Companion Synod program.

There are five core values in the Accompaniment Model:

Mutuality — We seek relationships that receive one another's gifts and expertise.

Inclusivity — We address exclusion and commit ourselves to making all people feel valued and embraced.

Vulnerability — We are open to Christ's transformation and reconciliation.

Empowerment — We build on each other's strengths and build capacity for God's mission.

Sustainability — We are accountable to each other, exercising good stewardship of God's gifts for the present and the future.

As companions, we seek to learn from each other and grow together in our commitment and zeal to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Global Mission Table projects are developed together through our companion relationships, bearing in mind the context and needs articulated by the companions.

A simple way for a congregation to learn more about Global Mission is to have Global Mission come to you! Pastor Katie offers virtual or live programs for Sunday Schools or weekday events and will gladly serve as a guest preacher. And Global Mission Team members all over Florida will eagerly tell about their involvement in companion ministry. Global Ministry can connect you to the synod, the churchwide expression and the world. Just ask!

CUBA REPORT

Grant helps church providing meals at Christmastime

Cuba has had tremendous success with the vaccination of its people against Covid. It is the only country in the Caribbean and Latin America to have developed its own vaccines — five different versions. CNBC reported in January that the island nation had vaccinated a greater proportion of its population — 86 percent — than most all of the world’s largest and richest nations. Another 7 percent of Cubans have been partially vaccinated. Shots have been administered to those as young as age 2.

Cuba, however, remains among the world’s poor nations because of economic blockades. Our companions at the Iglesia Evangélica Unida-Sínodo Luterano share the hope of Jesus Christ amid challenging financial circumstances. Each week, the church reports vibrant activities — Bible study, prayer groups, service projects and Christian education.

Our companion relationship with IEU-SL is a recent and growing one. The ELCA was approached by Bishop Laborde of IEU in 2018 to explore the possibilities of working together. The IEU is headquartered in the south of Cuba in Santiago with 11 congregations located in the general vicinity. Further, the church is member of the Lutheran World Federation.

A number of investigatory trips and conversations culminated in December 2019 with a group from the Florida-Bahamas Synod embarking on an immersion experience in Santiago de Cuba. The bonds established during this trip confirmed the desire of both parties to proceed with an accompaniment relationship. Both the



At Christmastime last year, youths and children portray a nativity scene at the Cristo Vive congregation of Cuba’s Evangelical United Church-Lutheran Synod.

ELCA Service and Justice Area and the FB Synod Global Mission Table are involved with the IEU.

The Florida-Bahamas Synod was blessed to be able to forward \$1,000 to the church at Christmastime to go toward providing annual holiday meals appreciated by many who are food insecure.



Left: Participants in the Cristo Vive children’s Christmas program receive applause. Above: A table abounds with taste treats for a traditional Cuban holiday meal.



Rev. Khader El-Yateem

Care to share your thoughts about Global Mission? Here's how to do it

Is the Spirit stirring you to delve more deeply into Global Mission? Perhaps you would like to share your thoughts about something you read in this newsletter, or maybe you would like to get involved.

To begin that conversation, contact Rev. Katie Carroll, chair of the Global Mission Table, at revkhc@gmail.com, or Rev. Khader El-Yateem, director for evangelical mission/assistant to the bishop, at khadere@fbsynod.org



Rev. Katie Carroll

The purpose of our Global Mission Table

The Global Mission Table of the Florida-Bahamas Synod seeks to ignite and empower its congregations in boldly sharing Christ, passionately making disciples, and faithfully doing justice through accompaniment with our companion churches. Through these partnerships, we strive to encourage one another in faith through relationships, education, advocacy and service in witness to God's love.

The Global Mission Table comprises 18 members, including an assistant to the bishop. In addition, for each companion relationship there is a synod team that focuses on just that relationship and reports — to the Global Mission Table at bi-monthly conference calls.

We welcome individuals with a desire to work with our global church partners to join us in this ministry. While travel has not been possible recently because of the pandemic, we and our companions continue to interact with each other digitally.

For more information about joining the Global Mission Table or any of its companion teams, contact Rev. Katie Carroll by e-mailing revkhc@gmail.com or by calling or texting 305-505-1656.

If you listen to the "16 Days of Activism for Gender Justice" video described in this newsletter, you will hear these words of benediction: In the name of the Father, *our Creator*; the Son, *our Redeemer*; and the Holy Spirit, *our Sustainer*. It's not a version heard often in ELCA Lutheran worship. Maybe your congregation would like to try it.

**Florida-Bahamas Synod
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