

Hand in Hand newsletter

STORIES FROM THE GLOBAL CHURCH FALL 2013 ELCA.org/globalchurch



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

LEFT: Susan Smith, ELCA missionary

RIGHT: Students use a classroom provided by the Village School Program of the Lutheran church.



Lutheran schools fill the gap

Many children in the Central African Republic have no school to attend. But thousands of students can now attend a “Village School” started by the Lutheran church in that country – and supported in part by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) members.

Susan Smith, an ELCA missionary serving with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Central African Republic as an adviser to the Village School Program, says there are now 20 primary schools in areas where there aren’t any government schools. The program supports the schools and teachers by helping create parent organizations, visiting classrooms to give teachers feedback, and providing quarterly exams.

As in any school, parental involvement is important, but in these schools it is the lifeblood. “Parents pay half of the teachers’ salaries

and the Village School Program pays the rest,” says Smith. “Parents are also responsible for building temporary classrooms, which have wooden supports and a straw roof.” The goal is to eventually have permanent buildings. And while the ELCA funds much of the construction of the building, parents are responsible for collecting stones and sand and making mud bricks, Smith says.

Today, thanks to ELCA member contributions, the Village School Program educates over 3,000 students, and, Smith adds, “The schools often have a better reputation for quality than the nearby government schools.”

Your gifts to ELCA Global Church Sponsorship directly fund missionaries like Susan Smith as they work hand in hand with our neighbors around the world. Learn more at www.ELCA.org/globalchurch.

Celebrating our global church

Congregations are invited to celebrate our church’s connection and common mission within Christ’s global church by sponsoring a Global Church Sunday. Consider these facts about our church’s global engagement:

- The ELCA belongs to The Lutheran World Federation, a global communion of **more than 70 million Lutherans in 79 countries**.
- Over **240 ELCA missionaries** work hand in hand with our neighbors in 40+ countries. Assignments range from a few months to eight years or more.
- In the last 25 years, **800 International Leaders** have received scholarships to complete their studies at colleges, universities and seminaries in the United States and around the world.
- There are more than **60 Young Adults in Global Mission** serving in nine countries this year. As they share their gifts of service, they also learn and grow from their host communities.



- Every year we respond to requests from companion churches for financial support to expand their **Global Ministries** – to start new congregations, extend outreach in urban areas and train pastors and evangelists.

ELCA Global Church Sponsorship offers opportunity for you or your congregation to help build up Christ’s church by sending Missionaries and Young Adults in Global Mission to work with our companions in Christ, and in 2014, your gifts will begin supporting International Leaders and Global Ministries.

Learn more at www.ELCA.org/GlobalChurchSunday and www.ELCA.org/globalchurch.



INDIA

LEFT: Sanchita Kisku is an International Leader scholarship recipient finishing her Ph.D. at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.



God has opened the door

Sanchita Kisku is curious. She wonders why there are so few female leaders or pastors in her church, when so many women fill leadership roles in Indian tribal culture. "If you give leadership to women, the church will grow," says Kisku. "How can women reclaim our tribe status as leaders in the church?"

This question is the focus of her thesis, which she will complete this December at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago before returning to teach at Santal Theological College in India. Kisku is an International Leader scholarship recipient. Her scholarship was made possible by generous gifts from ELCA members, a giving opportunity now available through ELCA Global Church Sponsorship. She says her church, the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church, and its companion, the South Central Wisconsin Synod, encouraged and supported her studies.

"The ELCA is listening to people around the world ... They are doing God's mission," says Kisku. "God has really opened the door for me. It's a privilege to study here."

When she returns to Santal this winter, Kisku's new knowledge and credentials will help the college gain status as a seminary, which will in turn build up more church leaders – especially women – who feel called to study theology in India.

"When I came to Chicago, I was swimming in the ocean. There was so much to know and to learn," says Kisku. "This different way of teaching, to be open-minded and to learn from each other, has opened my eyes."

In 2014, your gifts to ELCA Global Church Sponsorship will help support scholarships for International Leaders like Kisku. Learn more at www.ELCA.org/globalchurch.



Your gifts help make a world of difference in God's global mission!

Lanny Westphal Director, ELCA Global Church Sponsorship

Give by check

Make your check out to "ELCA Global Church Sponsorship." Write the name of a specific missionary or Young Adult in Global Mission in the memo line if you wish. Give through your congregation or mail to: ELCA Global Church Sponsorship, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694-1764.

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at www.ELCA.org/globalchurch/donate.

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