

# Mission of the Month

STORIES FROM THE GLOBAL CHURCH

2014 NO. 9



**LEFT:** Patricia Cuyatti, an ELCA International Leader doing God's work in Peru as she helps to build relationships between member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## A journey of wonder and discovery

**Patricia Cuyatti is an International Leader whose journey of faith has been shaped by wonder and discovery.**

When she was seven years old, Patricia wondered why so many children gathered at a nearby congregation during a school break. Her curiosity led her to discover its Vacation Bible School program – and soon after, faith in Christ.

Years later, Patricia felt God calling her to ministry. She became one of the first ordained pastors of the Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church, even serving as president.

Later, Patricia was encouraged by leaders in her church to apply for the ELCA's International Leaders program. With an ELCA scholarship, Patricia began graduate theological education in the United States, where she gained wider perspectives on her faith and the world.

"Freedom and the concept of living in freedom with responsibility," she says, "really reshaped my life."

After completing her doctorate, Patricia began working with the Lutheran World Federation. In her current role, she helps build relationships between member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In her education and in her new work, Patricia has seen how Latin American women like her who discern a call to ministry face challenges unique to their context. Often limited by family and cultural expectations, they can struggle for the freedom to respond to their call. Patricia hopes that together, we can change that.

"I hope that the ELCA continues thinking about leadership development in other countries because people who are trained go back to their churches – and I hope they do go back – or to positions that contribute to their churches."

Through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, our church has committed to empowering 200 more international women like Patricia as part of an expanded International Leaders program.

When women leaders from our companion churches have opportunities to advance their education, the global church will grow. Patricia says, "My plan is to contribute as much as I can to the work and mission of the member churches (of Latin America and the Caribbean)."  
— by Nathan Schmidt

## Get involved!

You can support the education of more women like Patricia with your prayers and your gifts to International Leaders – Women.  
Learn more at [www.ELCA.org/InternationalLeaders](http://www.ELCA.org/InternationalLeaders).



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