

# GLOBAL LINKS



**AUGUST 2020**

## International Women Leaders Grads: Where They Are Now



Graduates from the International Women Leaders (IWL) program have gone on to use their gifts around the world — from creating a hand-casting business in Suriname to working in migration ministry in Mexico to teaching for a nonprofit in Malaysia.

“I continue to do the work of the ELCA and the IWL program [by using] my gifts and talents,” said IWL scholar Sarah Abendanon. “And I pass it on by helping [my] neighbors wherever I can. No matter where we are and where we are from. We are one.” [Read more stories in this \*Living Lutheran\* article.](#)

The IWL program will welcome five new students to ELCA colleges and universities this coming academic year. The 2020 scholarship awards have been offered to excellent applicants from companion churches in Brazil, Nicaragua, Poland, The Gambia and Zambia. These incoming scholars will join 21 continuing IWL students, as well as 115 other ELCA scholars studying around the world.

## News Around the World



The ELCA joins the global Lutheran communion in mourning the passing of the Rev. Adita Torres Lescano, pastor president of the Lutheran Church of Peru. Please pray for her family, the church and our siblings in Peru experiencing this tremendous loss. [Read more in this \*Lutheran World Federation\* article.](#)

This month an explosion from a warehouse struck Beirut, Lebanon. [Read the \*Lutheran Disaster Response\* situation report here.](#)

## Mission Personnel Reflection



**By the Rev. Philip Knutson, regional representative for Southern Africa**

The 23rd International AIDS Conference (IAC) was scheduled to be held in San Francisco July 6-10. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizers decided to hold a virtual conference instead. As in the past, the ELCA's Global Mission unit provided scholarships for a number of representatives from companion churches around the world to attend the conference. Three delegates from churches in Southern Africa were selected.

Ms. Chifamba, who is based in Zimbabwe and serves as coordinator of the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA) Infohut program, made arrangements with the head office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) so she could participate in the virtual conference with four Infohut facilitators observing. (The LUCSA Infohut program teaches young people about HIV and AIDS and provides life skills and computer training.)

Ms. Chifamba describes some of the challenges she and her colleagues faced attending the virtual conference when Zimbabwe is still in a COVID-19 lockdown. There is a nine-hour time difference between Zimbabwe and San Francisco, and it is winter in Zimbabwe, so staying up late at night in the office wasn't easy. They also had to organize COVID-19 preparedness for themselves, including an infrared screening thermometer, hand sanitizers, masks, good ventilation and reasonable distancing during the conference.

The first night, two of the five participants were too excited to sleep and attended the workshop for 16 hours continuously. The program allowed for discussions in breakaway groups or clubs. Among the topics were new ideas for improving the outcomes of the Infohut program. The ELCZ Infohut facilitators who attended the IAC strongly feel that the Infohut program deserves a presenter's spot in the next conference, saying, "What we do deserves to be shared with the world." Ms. Chifamba and the four facilitators expressed their sincere thanks to the ELCZ, LUCSA and ELCA for the support that enabled them to be part of this important event.

### A Global Service update:

The Global Mission unit has prudently decided to delay the sending of new missionaries during summer 2020, with a few exceptions. The ELCA will continue to send teachers to participate in the Japan ESL Teacher program, and the ELCA will send two Horizon International interns this year to congregations in Argentina and Malaysia. The orientation for new mission personnel was held virtually in July. We ask that you keep all our missionaries and companions in your prayers during this time.

## Get Involved

Starting this month, Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) alums are raising funds to strengthen the program through the **#YAGMForward campaign**, paying it forward for the next cohort. Your support is especially needed right now. While the pandemic has prevented YAGM from sending volunteers, the work of this vital ministry continues as YAGM country coordinators partner with our global companions in these challenging times. The #YAGMForward campaign runs from Aug. 20 to Jan. 31, 2021, with each country program aiming to raise \$15,000. [Give a gift in honor of one of the 10 YAGM country programs today!](#)

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