



Women from Mountain of God Evangelical International Church, Baltimore, dance and sing during worship.



MANY LANGUAGES, ONE GROWING CHURCH

When God spoke to Jean Paul Kisuku, Kisuku knew he had to listen.

While living in the Congo, Kisuku spread the gospel through prayer groups with fellow Congolese and neighbors in nearby Uganda. After immigrating to the United States and settling in Maryland, he stepped away from ministry to focus on secular work to support his family.

God had other plans.

Asked about his return to ministry, Kisuku said, "God is moving you to do his work, and if you say 'yes' you will be OK."

Kisuku and his family were resettled by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and Christ Lutheran Church, Baltimore. Seeing how the congregation welcomed newcomers, Kisuku reached out to Christ's associate pastor, Amsalu Geleta, and volunteered to conduct a prayer service there in Swahili, the native language of Congo.

"He gathered five families for the first day in October 2016," said Geleta, who now serves as executive assistant to the bishop and director for evangelical mission in the Delaware-Maryland Synod. "He's a wonderful evangelist, and he reached out to many people who speak Swahili, French, Lingala — new arrivals, most of them."

That prayer service has evolved to become Mountain of God Evangelical International Church, a new congregation bolstered by grants from the ELCA churchwide

organization and the Delaware-Maryland Synod that were funded by Mission Support.

Mountain of God's membership now boasts over 150 people. Geleta believes the growth has been inspiring for the synod.

Much of that growth can be attributed to Kisuku's determination to bring God's word to as many African-descent people as possible. Many prospective members lacked transportation, so Kisuku began driving them to and from church.

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"How can one ministry be born or stand by itself?" Geleta said. "The participation of everyone helps plant and nurture it to make it grow. And the spirit of evangelism to the church revives us all."

To watch a video of this ministry, visit ELCA.org/SOFIA.

Thank you for your generous gifts of Mission Support, which made this story of faith in action possible. Mission Support is the portion of your offering your congregation shares with your synod, and your synod shares with the churchwide organization. To learn more, visit ELCA.org/SOFIA.