



Global Mission

Statement of purpose

The Global Mission unit is responsible for the ELCA's mission outside the territorial United States and serves as the channel through which churches in other countries engage in mission to this church. This engagement occurs through the theology and practice of "accompaniment," a journey with many companions where the unrecognized Christ shows up time and time again with and among us — frequently in quite unexpected ways. In this journey we break bread together and God invites us through Christ and the Spirit to participate in God's mission of reconciliation and restoration of community. When the church shows up, the gospel shows up and God's work of reconciling the whole creation to God — and each of us to one another — is made known.

Accompaniment means that the ELCA joins with companion churches around the globe to touch people's lives through the presence of missionaries, health-care and education ministries, leadership formation, sustainable development, disaster prevention and mitigation, and peace and reconciliation. When the Global Mission unit shows up as church together for the sake of the world and touches the lives of hundreds of thousands of women, men and children for the flourishing of human community, the gospel of good news in Jesus Christ is proclaimed and every expression of the ELCA is transformed for missional engagement in their context.

The governing description of Global Mission appears in ELCA continuing resolution 16.12.B13. See Section XII of the *Pre-Assembly Report*.

Report of work for 2013-2016

The ELCA's global mission engagement shows up around the world in four ways.

ONE: ELCA Global Mission shows up as church together for the sake of the world every time God calls us — and we respond — to proclaim the gospel with and among our Lutheran brothers and sisters around the world.

In 2017 millions of Lutherans worldwide will celebrate the birth of the Protestant Reformation. This will be more than just a time for remembering and honoring Lutheran heritage — it will also be a joyful celebration that recognizes the growth and continued birth of new Lutheran churches in the Global South.



Bishop Samuel Thomas teaches members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of The Gambia.

In the **West African** country of **The Gambia**, the ELCA is joining with Lutherans in neighboring **Senegal** to help a new Lutheran church grow in a 90 percent Muslim context.

In **East Africa**, the ELCA is working collaboratively with the **Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan** to found the **Evangelical Lutheran Church Africa Mission in South Sudan**. In 2015 the construction of a Lutheran community center and a health clinic began. Two ELCA missionaries originally from South Sudan are supporting the birth of this church.

Critical funding for the evangelism work and construction in The Gambia and South Sudan comes from ELCA members through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

Some of the youngest and fastest growing Lutheran churches in **Asia** are found in **Indonesia, India, Nepal, Cambodia** and **Myanmar**. Like in West Africa, longtime ELCA companion churches are driving much of this growth.

The **Lutheran Church in Cambodia** has grown out of the **Lutheran Church in Singapore's** evangelism efforts. In a country that is in rapid economic and political transformation from a troubled past that includes genocide, the challenge of creating new spiritual homes while meeting the livelihood and education needs of the people is great. That's why in **Cambodia** the Lutheran church shows up and touches people's lives through agricultural and nutrition projects, supplemental education for children and youth, and evangelism. Evangelism in Cambodia is especially exciting as it is centered on young adults — like those pictured here — whose enthusiasm for proclaiming and living the



Parishioners worship at the City Church of the Lutheran Church in Cambodia. This congregation is made up primarily of university students, some of whom have helped grow the church when they returned to their hometowns.

gospel is catching. The 2017 Reformation 500 observance is also a reminder of the many contexts around the world where serious conversation about what it means to be Lutheran today is happening. **Asia** is a region where the world's great religions intersect, providing a challenge to what it means to be in Christian witness in the context of growing religious tensions.

In **Latin America** and **the Caribbean**, traditional theological institutions are in crisis. For example, one of the most renowned theological institutions in **Argentina** had to close its doors in 2015. But a resurgence of new programs is equipping and empowering lay leaders to work alongside pastors in word and sacrament ministry. This is good news for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

In the immense **Siberian** region of **Russia**, congregations, theology students and pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia have gathered in person and at a distance for seminars on a wide range of topics including biblical studies, Lutheran Confessions, church history, pastoral care, Christian ethics, and mission and pastoral care. This ministry can be supported through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

The ELCA is a church that is sent into the world for the sake of the gospel. The presence of 223 missionaries in 49 countries demonstrates one way the ELCA shows up and proclaims the gospel and receives the many gifts of its global companions. Over the past three years, Global Mission has sent 130 new missionaries (not including the Young Adults in Global Mission — see below) into service as teachers, health-care workers, Horizon interns, pastors, professors and more.

Global Mission also shows up as the channel for churches in other countries to engage in mission to this church. The gifts of our companions transform the way we are church together in the ELCA. Through companion synod relationships and networks of globally engaged constituencies, this church's global mission work is shaped by accompaniment values and the ELCA is equipped for



The Rev. Wal Reat is an ELCA missionary serving as pastor to South Sudanese in refugee camps at the border of South Sudan and Ethiopia (Gambella).

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In Siberia, 40 congregational members gathered under the theme "Ironman," an appropriate topic for sustaining faith and life in a harsh Siberian environment.



mission in an increasingly “global” U.S. context. Since 2013 more than 1,100 ELCA members have participated in some 50 events, visits and consultations that have touched cherished relationships that span nearly the entire globe.

ELCA global companions also shape how the ELCA understands itself to be church through Global Mission’s education and interpretation work. At more than 55 events since September 2013, the ELCA has brought the gifts of companion churches to bear on practical conversations about cross-cultural relationships, migration and immigration, cross-generational ministry, interfaith dialogue, worship that includes global music and story, peace and nonviolence, and short-term mission trips. At these global and domestic events, ELCA members have interacted, engaged, and taken away the alternative mission narratives and skills for ministry in the U.S. context.

Global Mission has also developed leaders who serve as music-educators at events across the ELCA. The Annual Musicians Training event has led to the formation of a community of incredibly diverse and talented musician-leaders who share the musical gifts of our companions.



Group photo of musician-educators gathered at the 2016 Annual Musicians Training in Chicago.

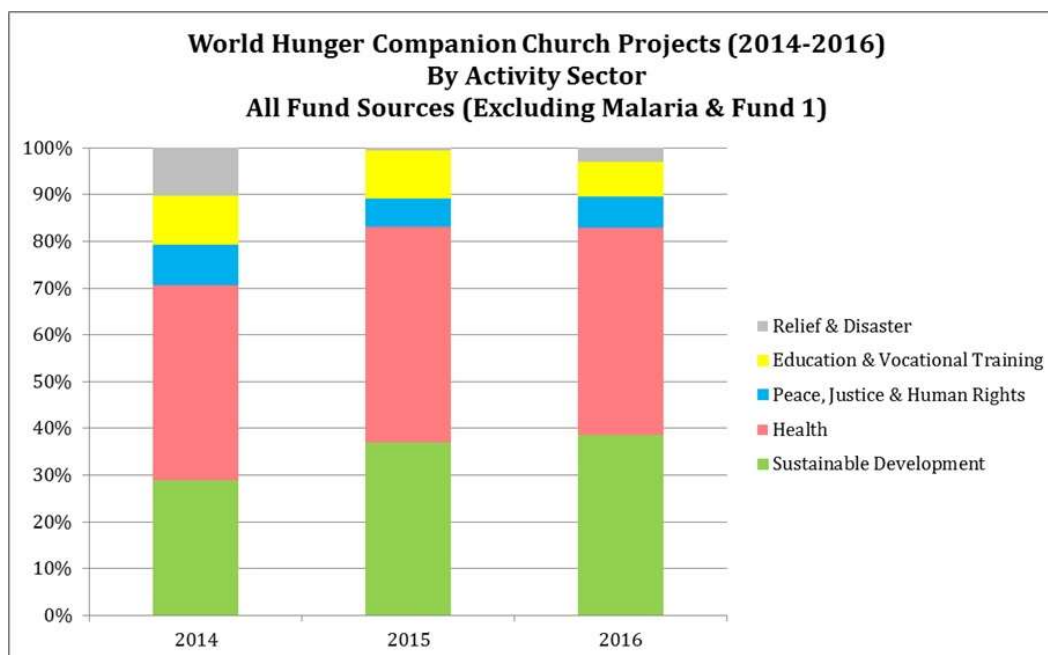
TWO: The ELCA shows up as church together for the sake of the world amid difficult situations. Through relief, development and advocacy work carried out primarily with companion churches, and through the power of the gospel, Global Mission touches lives, reconciling communities and restoring hope for a better future — until all are fed.

The ELCA has boldly stepped into difficult situations in more than 65 countries through its relief, development and advocacy work. Thanks primarily to ELCA member and congregational support to ELCA World Hunger, over the past three years 1,000 grants were provided and many thousands of lives were touched — as Fyness Phiri’s story below demonstrates — in nearly every corner of the globe.



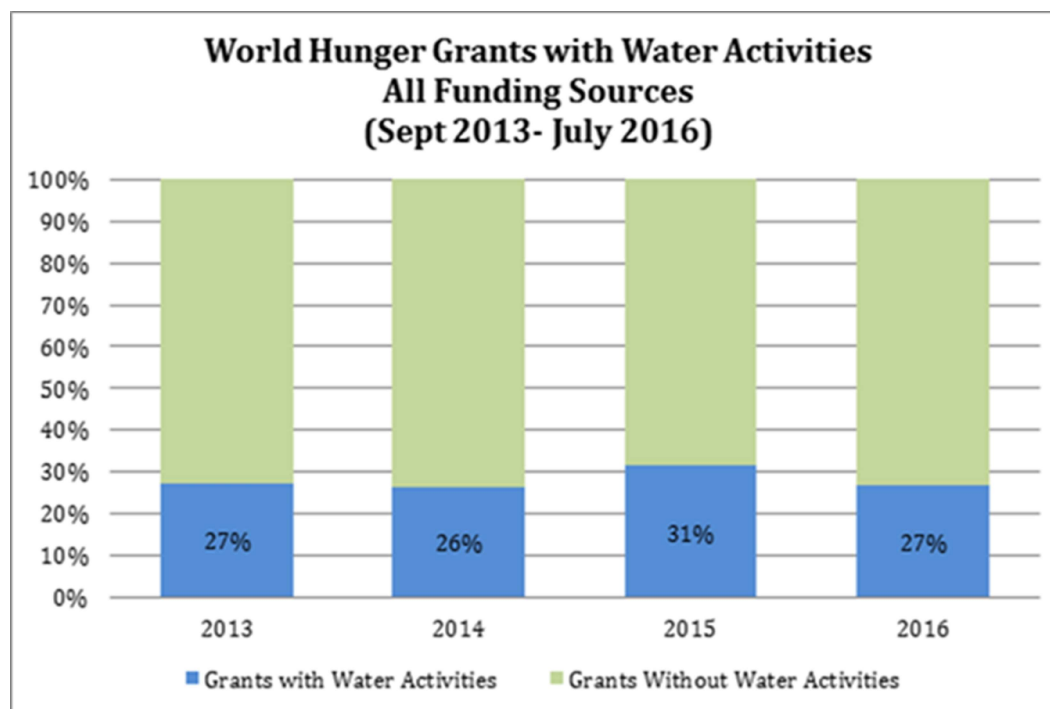
*Fyness Phiri is a resilient survivor who applies what she has learned from Evangelical Lutheran Development Service trainings. With other women in **Malawi**, she formed a village savings and loan association. She sells fish, invests profits in a vegetable garden and sells surpluses. A mother of four, she is proud to afford clothes, medical bills and a stronger home for her family. "I was one of the poorest people in [my] village ... since I joined the [Livelihoods Improvement and Empowerment] project, my life has completely changed. I have food in my house ... money to use and ... send my children to school."*

Because the ELCA understands itself to be a church that primarily engages other churches for the sake of the world's most vulnerable people, the number of grants in sustainable development, health and other sectors provided to its Lutheran companions has been rising steadily. Amid a suffering world that hungers for God's justice and mercy, it is cause for celebration to know that ELCA global companions are implementing stronger projects and making bigger impacts in the lives of the communities they serve. (See graph below.)



While the ELCA's reach is far and the area in which it engages with companion churches and other partners like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Lutheran World Relief is broad, ELCA members have a particularly powerful story to tell about this church's work around water. Many World Hunger projects use an integrated approach, and water is often a critical and interconnecting component of that work. Access to clean water helps families stay healthy, provides women and children more time to work and attend school, and can increase agricultural production and food security in areas experiencing low and erratic rainfall.

As illustrated below, in nearly a third of all the international projects the ELCA supports through World Hunger, water work is present and spans a wide range of activities, including the creation of water sources (i.e. boreholes, spring boxes and wells) and irrigation systems, as well as promotion of WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and latrines.



Access to water is just one aspect of the hoped-for transformation that will overturn social, structural and systemic injustice. Better access to health care is another. With ELCA support, the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi** (ELCM) has a mobile clinic, runs community clinics that provide HIV testing and counseling, and provides nutritional support for vulnerable children (primarily under age 5), including those orphaned by HIV and AIDS. Through the ELCM malaria program's village savings and loan associations, members mobilized more than \$300,000, improving economic status of 3,000 families, many of whom purchased mosquito nets or accessed health care with their savings. This means that today more communities now protect themselves from HIV and malaria.

Overall impact of ELCA Malaria Campaign in 13 African countries: 2012-2015

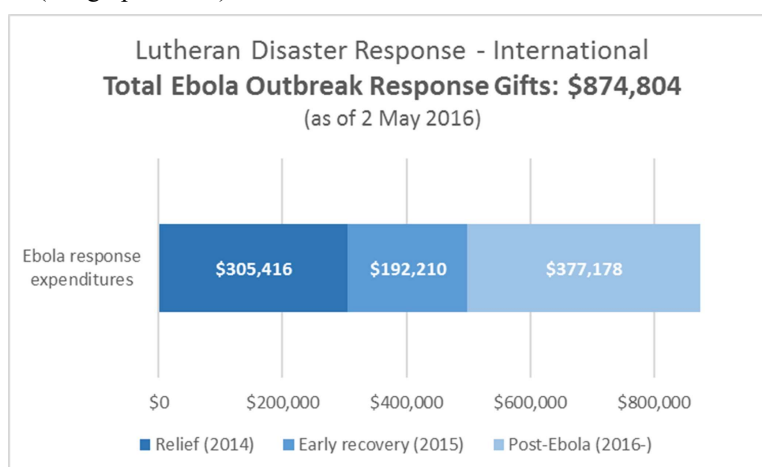
- Number of church and community leaders trained: 12,797
- Number of people reached with malaria education: 2,319,876
- Number of mosquito nets purchased/distributed: 61,112
- Number of information, education and communication materials distributed: 79,940
- Number of people tested for malaria (and treated, if positive): 209,590
- Number of pregnant women receiving at least one dose of malaria preventive treatment: 32,837
- Number of households economically empowered by sustainable livelihoods activities: 14,123
- Dollars mobilized by village savings and loans associations: \$718,149

The ELCA also has a presence following international disasters. Over the past three years the ELCA has responded 70 times to disasters in more than 35 countries. Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, Nepal earthquake in 2014 and other disasters taught the ELCA some important lessons. The ELCA is now shifting its focus from only quick disaster responses to a more holistic and integrated approach. This means that this church's immediate response goes along with

preparedness and rehabilitation and transition to development. This novel approach addresses both the immediate and long-term needs of people affected by disasters.

The ELCA's work in **East Central Europe** demonstrates how a holistic, integrated approach to a disaster can work. In 2014 spring rains flooded low-lying areas of **East Central Europe**. The impoverished Roma settlement in Mišar in western Serbia suffered some of the worst damage. According to an ACT Alliance report, settlement housing was inadequate because it was made from "improvised materials such as plastic, sticks, mud, old wood, scrap metal, or cardboard, with no adequate communal infrastructure." Through the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, the ELCA provided immediate humanitarian assistance to 100 families. It also committed to helping the community rebuild each house with proper building materials and to add bathrooms. For this fishing village, the ELCA didn't just show up once and then leave — this church came and stayed for the long haul as a sign of God's restorative hope for all people.

ELCA engagement in **West and Central Africa** tells a similar story of how this church shows up alongside its companions as they contend with extreme situations. The Ebola epidemic that deeply impacted ELCA companion churches in **Sierra Leone** and **Liberia** and partners in **Guinea** is one of those situations. With support from Lutheran Disaster Response, the ELCA was present through the darkest days of this epidemic. Thanks to ELCA members and congregations, health-care workers received protective suits, survivors were counseled, the stigma of Ebola was addressed, children were fed, and hand-washing drums, bleach, soap powder and flash thermometers were given to public schools, communities and health centers. Today this church continues to show up as its companions move from recovery to post-Ebola prevention (see graph below).



In the face of such difficult situations like Ebola, advocacy and peacemaking are powerful forces that show how the gospel touches lives, reconciles communities and restores hope for a better future. **Zimbabwe** is one of the many countries where the ELCA is joining with others to work for peace and reconciliation in contexts where violence has endured for decades. A colonial legacy left communities polarized and many Zimbabweans hurting, traumatized and seeking revenge. The ELCA and local ELCA personnel united with other stakeholders to create a leader's forum where facilitation and mediation skills blossomed. Today church and community leaders have greater capacity to mediate conflicts and prevent violence.

In the **Middle East**, the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land** — with leadership from Bishop Munib A. Younan — continues to advocate for peace with justice for the Palestinian people and raise a strong voice for religious minorities in the region, including Christians. ELCA is Aaron to their Moses, holding up their hands when they grow weary in the struggle.

THREE: Global Mission shows up in the lives of young women and men, helping them become agents of transformation of our church and the world.

The ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program and the leadership opportunities the ELCA provides to women from its global companion churches point to the transformation the Lutheran church seeks in the U.S. and around

the world. In 1999 the ELCA sent 10 Young Adults in Global Mission into service, and that number grew to 38 in 2008. With generous support from Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA, in 2106 Global Mission anticipates sending more than 85 Young Adults in Global Mission to more than 12 country programs currently operating in five continents.

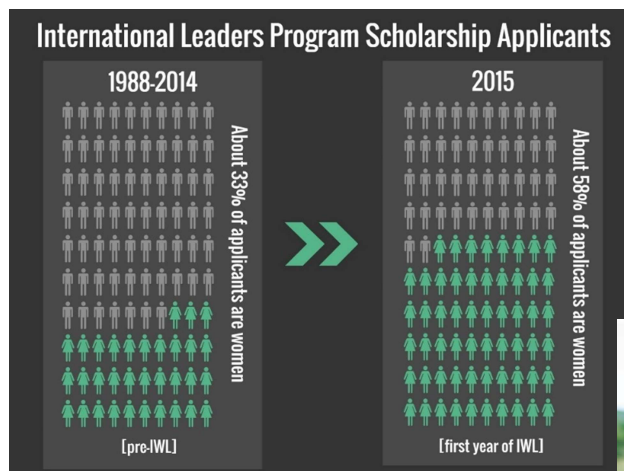


The ELCA International Leaders Program has provided transformational opportunities for global companions through support for study programs in the areas of theology, medicine, education, natural sciences, technology, business, social work, language and vocational training.

Among the extraordinary individuals impacted by this program in the last three years are the first woman from the Central African Republic to receive a doctorate in theology, the first woman from the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (India) to receive a doctorate in theology, the first scholar to translate a Bible commentary into the Telegu language, and several recently appointed bishops, seminary leaders and professors.

- Recipients come from 38 countries.
- Over the history of the program, more than 950 individuals nominated by this church's global companions have been supported and have completed their programs of study.
- Of 2013-2016 scholarship recipients, 64 percent are pursuing a theological degree (includes theology, biblical studies, congregational studies, etc.) and 36 percent are pursuing a non-theological degree.

In response to historically low numbers of female scholarship applicants (only a third of total applications over the life of the program), in 2014 the International Leaders Program launched the International Women Leaders initiative, a focus of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA. In the first year of this effort to increase access to education and training opportunities among women, 65 women have received grants for degree programs and leadership seminars. Additionally, the initiative has led to a significant increase in the number of women who apply for scholarships in the first place — in 2015, 58 percent of all applicants were women.



From left: Sthela Gun Holly Hanitrinirina (Madagascar), Abby Lai (Malaysia) and Sarah Abendanon (Suriname) are three of the six young women attending ELCA colleges in the first year of the International Women Leaders initiative.

Women's empowerment has also been at the forefront of the work of the Lutheran Office for World Community, which represents the ELCA and the LWF before the United Nations. Since 2013 this office has brought together women from across the globe to participate in the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The CSW promotes women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world and shaping global standards on gender equality. In 2015 and 2016 a total of 15 international companion women church leaders participated in the CSW and emerged with new capacities to be agents of transformation of church and society in their contexts.



The Rev. Elitha Moyo attended the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women in 2014 and had the opportunity at the Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations to share the work her church does to train pastors on issues of violence against women and women's empowerment. When she returned home, government representatives, some of whom had attended the CSW, asked her to see how these programs could be integrated into the curriculum of national schools. Since then close cooperation between her church and the government has existed on gender justice issues.

Photo credit line: Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (left), executive director of U.N. Women and Rev. Elitha Moyo, coordinator of the ELCZ Gender Justice Project. Photo: Christine Mangale – LWI

Photo source: <https://www.lutheranworld.org/news/lwf-addresses-gender-justice-commission-status-women>

FOUR: In the stories of God’s vulnerable people who are on the move all over the world in unprecedented numbers, Global Mission sees a critical area where the church needs to show up and stay over the next 10 years.

In recent years the international community has learned that churches show up and stay long term when civil strife, endemic violence, human trafficking networks, drought and humanitarian disasters push people out of their homes and across borders. A church that shows up and stays long term is critical because displaced families and individuals spend an average of 17 years away from home before they are repatriated or resettled in a receiving country. Women, children and the elderly are especially vulnerable.

The ELCA is in a unique position to walk with vulnerable people on the move and with the communities they encounter by providing humanitarian assistance and developing durable solutions. The ELCA’s robust capacity to show up and stay is a product of the relationships it stewards with more than 120 companion churches and partner agencies in nearly 100 countries.

In early 2015 the value of these relationships came into practice when companions in **Serbia, Romania and Hungary** warned the ELCA that the influx of asylum-seekers from the **Middle East and North Africa** would swell beyond their countries’ capacity to respond. The world watched as migrants crossed the Mediterranean and trekked toward asylum in **Western Europe**. Once the appeal went out, ELCA members responded with financial gifts at an unprecedented level to provide baby items, water, food, blankets and other humanitarian aid.

Now in **Eastern Europe, Jordan and Iraq**, the ELCA is cooperating with companion churches to provide a warm welcome to refugees and is supporting Lutheran World Federation projects for peacemaking and reconciliation among children and families. Closer to home, the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) program has been the guide for Global Mission’s engagement with the root causes of the major migratory wave of unaccompanied children fleeing violence and poverty in **Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador**.



Currently more than 60 million people worldwide have been moved from their homes to another place by force or expulsion, climate change, economic constraints or trafficking. Shown here are vulnerable people on the move in Hungary in 2015.

A future with millions of vulnerable people on the move is calling the ELCA toward a holistic, whole church response to this historically unprecedented situation. ELCA social statements express this church’s commitment to respond to Jesus’ call to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for children, widows and the most vulnerable in society. These will inform a strategy that will provide for protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as durable solutions that address root causes and the needs of migrants in transit. This is a critical area of God’s work for which the ELCA is seeking to show up and stay over the next decade.

Conclusion

Writing to the community in Corinth, Paul reflects on the significance of the Damascus experience. He was called to proclaim the “righteousness of God,” God’s favor toward humankind through Jesus that transforms lives, communities, the world and the whole of creation. In our baptism we participate in Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, and we are called, gathered and sent to be “witnesses to all these things.”

Like Paul, we, too, affirm that “an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel,” God’s good news in and through Jesus, the Christ. Global Mission seeks to listen carefully to and be transformed by Paul’s words and, together with the whole church, make this the gospel of Jesus Christ known to the ends of the earth.

The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, *executive director*