

Southern Africa: South Africa and Zimbabwe

April 13-23, 2026



With the socioeconomic and political context in Southern Africa varying from country to country, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) listens to and accompanies our companions as they address the unique needs of their communities. Supported by gifts to ELCA World Hunger and the service of ELCA global personnel invited by these companions, this accompaniment includes engaging in HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention programs, gender and economic justice interventions, peace and reconciliation initiatives, health and hospital services, and development and sustainable livelihood programs.

While South Africa has an emerging democracy and stable economy, there remains a significant disparity between the poor and the rich. Many communities have not yet recovered from the effects of the apartheid system, and the country is still divided along racial and ethnic lines. A majority of the population is still very poor and therefore vulnerable to HIV and AIDS and tuberculosis, placing South Africa among countries that have the highest number of people infected and affected by the virus.

In neighboring Zimbabwe, people continue to face a complex socioeconomic and political crisis. There are serious challenges related to governance, education and brain drain. The country's high unemployment rate leads young people to engage in drug and substance abuse, early marriages and teenage pregnancies. Other challenges include insufficient monitoring of human rights and gender equality violations, restrictions on freedom of expression and access to information, gender-based violence, and HIV and AIDS. As of March 2025, over one-third of its population is facing food insecurity. At present, there are significant political divisions leading to unrest and instability.

The ELCA engages with the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe to ensure the voice of the global church is heard on these critical issues affecting our siblings in Christ throughout the region.

Your Invitation

Join us on a trip to see God's work firsthand in South Africa and Zimbabwe. You will experience Lutheran development projects for youth, women and young adults in vulnerable communities, including those related to agriculture, sustainability and climate change; responses to HIV and AIDS; and church-led and supported initiatives addressing gender justice, women's empowerment and peacebuilding. You will find community in our siblings in Christ, rejuvenate your vision for the church and witness the powerful impact of companion relationships at work in the world.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



Tentative Trip Itinerary: April 12-23, 2026

April 12

Estimated departure from the U.S.

April 13

Arrival in Johannesburg, South Africa.

April 14

Orientation on the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa, followed by a visit to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa's (ELCSA) HIV and AIDS program, a recipient of ELCA World Hunger grants, in Soweto.

April 15

Fly to the Eastern Cape and visit an ELCSA community development project supported by ELCA World Hunger.

April 16

Fly to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. Orientation at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe's (ELCZ) Lutheran Development Services, then drive to Kwekwe in central Zimbabwe.

April 17

Visit ELCZ programs supported by ELCA World Hunger, including the Burure Mission, InfoHut, and a clinic and gender justice program. Overnight stay in Kwekwe.

April 18

Visit Lutheran Development Services' programs in Zvishavane and Mberengwa, followed by a visit to the ELCZ's women's empowerment program.

April 19

Worship at an ELCZ congregation in Zvishavane, followed by an afternoon briefing by church leaders.

April 20

Visit the Ecumenical Church Leaders Forum, a peacebuilding program, as well as the ELCZ hospital. Drive to Bulawayo for an overnight stay.

April 21

Visit the ELCZ office for a debriefing and presentation on other projects, including a youth climate change initiative. Fly to Hwange for the evening.

April 22

Visit Victoria Falls and the game park; enjoy various recreational activities.

April 23

Evening flights from Victoria Falls to the U.S.

Cost per person: \$5,700

This cost includes 10 days of travel—airfare, lodging, transportation and food, as well as an allowance for estimated domestic travel costs. The cost does not include personal extended stays, personal purchases or alcohol. Additional costs may apply based on the final cost of domestic airfare for individual departure airports.

Registration

To register or for more information, please contact Jennifer Kenyeri, manager of development events, at Jennifer.Kenyeri@elca.org or **773-380-2872**. The trip will involve long road trips, long periods of walking and limited access for those with mobility challenges.