

2010 Global Mission Gathering, Billings – PRESENTERS, WORKSHOP FACILITATORS, MUSICIANS

PRESENTERS

Accompaniment:

Dr. José D. Rodríguez is director of the multicultural center at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). Ordained in 1975, Rodríguez served congregations in Puerto Rico and Chicago. He held visiting appointments at the Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico and the Comunidad Teologica de Mexico, and was an adjunct faculty member at Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Ill., and Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, Ill., before joining the LSTC faculty in 1985. Following his B.A. degree from the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Rodríguez received both masters' degrees and doctor of theology degree at LSTC.

Culture

Sunitha Mortha serves the ELCA Global Mission program unit as director for Global Formation - Program, specifically working with educational events, resource development, transformative travel, and cross-cultural competencies.

Local Mission

The Rev. Jessica Crist is bishop of the Montana Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Prior to assuming that office, Pastor Crist served as associate to the bishop and director of the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology. She has served congregations in Great Falls, Montana, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and started in ministry as a campus pastor. A member of the transition team that helped put together the Montana Synod from the predecessor churches, she was elected synod secretary at the Constituting Convention and served in that capacity for 12 years.

WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

New and Renewing congregations

Pastor Helga Jansons of Kennewick, WA is the director for Evangelical Mission for the Eastern Washington/Idaho Synod. Born and raised in Australia, she moved to the U.S. in 1989 because the Lutheran Church of Australia does not ordain women. Helga graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1991 and served several ELCA congregations in New Jersey. After moving to Washington State she has served as both a mission developer and as an interim pastor for a rapidly growing evangelical congregation. She has been involved in the preparations for a Hispanic/ Latino New Ministry Start, and has worked with congregations that are actively in the Renewal/ Redevelopment stage.

Stewardship

Pastor Dave Peters assists the Montana Synod in the areas of mission strategy and evangelism outreach, mission support and stewardship education, and new congregation development and multicultural ministry. He has served previously as the executive director for Lutheran Social Services of Montana where he directed Montana's Lutheran Disaster response and established the nationally recognized training program, Spiritual Accompaniment In Disaster (S.A.I.D.). Pastor Peters also has been a missionary to Indonesia.

Social Action

Kathleen Rudrud, a member of Ascension Lutheran, Thousand Oaks, Calif., is part of a network of volunteers who share the mission and vision of ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response with local communities and congregations. While traveling in East Africa, Central and South America she has had the opportunity to see firsthand the efforts of the ELCA and our partners at work. The stories and people touched her heart and motivated her to serve in this way.

David Creech, director of Hunger Education in the ELCA World Hunger program, received an M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary in southern California, his native state, and is now in the last leg of a Ph.D. in theology at Loyola University Chicago. He is especially passionate about the church's historical identity as people who have worked with and on behalf of orphans and widows, in other words, the most vulnerable people in society, and is delighted to work for ELCA World Hunger where the opportunity exists to use that passion to educate and raise awareness of the realities of hunger and poverty.

Mission 101

Philip Knutson serves the ELCA as regional program assistant for Southern Africa. Several participants in Montana Synod Companion Synod trips to the Cape Orange Diocese have become acquainted with Phil there. This is our chance to welcome him to Montana!

Louis Dorvilier is director for the ELCA International Development and Disaster Response Program and previously served with his wife Mytch as GM's regional representatives for West Africa. Louis has a Bachelor of Science in economics from the State University of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and an advanced degree in the economics of development from the University of Geneva. Louis has collaborated with the social movements in Haiti, Venezuela, Belgium and Israel for human rights and economic justice; conducted major studies on the impact of globalization on third world countries for the Inter-American Bank of Development; worked as a policy officer for the United Nations Least Developed Countries Forum; and worked with the Lutheran World Federation, World Service in Haiti, Dominican Republic, and the Caribbean Islands.

Mytch Dorvilier was born, raised, and attended school in Haiti. She has a B.A. in business administration. She also studied in Germany, worked for the Lutheran World Federation in Haiti and been a UNICEF trainer. She and her family served for four years in Dakar, Senegal as ELCA Global Mission regional and associate representatives for West Africa. There she worked with the local church in Dakar and the other seven countries (Sénégal, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Liberia, Nigeria, Gambia, and Sierra Leone), doing from French/English translation and participating in the life of non-Christian friends in Senegal.

Cross-Generational Engagement

With deep roots in the Lutheran church and broad experience with families through all of life's ages and stages, **Linda Staats** has a passion for passing on faith from generation to generation through a vital partnership between church and home. She currently serves as assistant to the bishop for youth and household ministry in the Rocky Mountain Synod. Linda coordinated the children's program for the 2008 Global Mission Event, incorporating the ELCA accompaniment model and age-appropriate resources.

Aaron Tidwell is known for his enthusiastic and engaging approach toward youth ministry. As someone passionate about youth and service, Aaron has worked with hundreds of youth and adults to lead a wide variety of creative, fun, and faith-filled projects. He believes it is very important for us to step up and make a positive difference in this world and that "everybody matters". For the last 17 years, Aaron has served as director of Family Ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church, in Manhattan Beach, California, enriching the youth through music and laughter.

Short-Term Travel

Valora K. Starr began her churchwide ministry in evangelism and stewardship with youth ministries in 1983. Currently serving Women of the ELCA as director for Discipleship which includes evangelism, discipleship and global education, her work in these areas helps women live out the purpose and mission of Women of the ELCA. Her goal is to expand women's understanding of discipleship, their witness and collective ministry to the church, society and world. She is a member of Bethel Lutheran Church on Chicago's Westside and feels the congregation is at the heart of the church and its ministry of sharing the Good News.

Katie Ernst lives in North Minneapolis in an intentional community house with six other people who all bring their different expertise to the group. This community is devoted to live differently, to love humanity and to be ever searching for the Divine, in its own way. Members share dinners with each other, hang with the neighborhood kids, raise chickens for eggs and have a large garden. In a neighborhood where gunshots are heard daily and yelling is constant the community has become a peaceful place amidst the chaos of the surroundings. Katie is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota with a degree in gender, women, sexuality studies and social justice.

Preaching, Worship and Mission

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Phelps Ollikainen is associate for Worship Resources in the Worship and Liturgical Resources unit of the church-wide office. Prior to this call, she served as associate pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Springfield, Penn. She holds a Master of Divinity, Sacred Theology Master in New Testament and Doctor of Ministry in worship from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Before seminary, she was a music therapist working with people dually diagnosed with developmental disabilities and mental illness.

Musicians

Mark Abelsen attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis, receiving a bachelor of music degree in piano performance. He currently serves as director of worship and music at Mount Calvary Lutheran Church in Excelsior, MN. Mark has gained a reputation as a multi-faceted teacher, conductor, and pianist, being well-versed in classical, jazz, Latin, and global playing styles. Mark has lead worship all over the country for various ELCA events, including the 2008 WELCA Triennial Gathering and the 2008 Global Mission Event in La Crosse, WI.

Mikyoung Park, originally from South Korea, is pursuing a master of divinity degree, with concentration on children, youth, and family, at Luther Seminary. She holds a doctorate in musical art, voice performance, from the University of Minnesota and a master in sacred music (choral conducting) from Luther Seminary. Both a church musician and professional singer, Mikyoung has served as a global events musician for several years, and is a choir director at two Methodist churches.

Maestro is a musician from Atlanta. He has participated at several Global Mission events over the past few years.

Cathy Pino, originally from Pennsylvania, has lived in the Minneapolis area for twenty years. She is working her way toward an M. Div. with a concentration on peace and justice work through United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. With interests and gifts in various areas of creative arts and ministry, Cathy has served as a resource musician for the ELCA's various Global Mission events, as well as a worship leader in her congregation and at Youth Encounter events, women's retreats, camps and other gatherings of God's people. She also serves as a freelance writer for Augsburg Fortress Publishing.

Dina Tannous grew up in Ramallah in Palestine, a third-generation Lutheran. She came to the U.S. in 1997 to study at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in music ministry. She has been a member of the music teams of several Global Mission Events. She has received a Master of Arts degree from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and plans to return to Palestine in 2011 to work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, where she entered the candidacy process for ordination.

Omar Mixco, from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, currently plays for his church band at Good Shepherd, Naperville, IL. Mixco freelances at various Chicagoland churches as a guitarist. In July 2009, Mixco played lead guitar at the ELCA Multicultural Youth Leadership Event in New Orleans, Louisiana. Omar began playing guitar at the age of 15 in his church in Tegucigalpa and started teaching guitar at the age of 23. In 2003 with a group of local musicians, Mixco formed the Christian band Antivirus and launched his professional music career. In 2006 Antivirus won a battle of the bands contest in Honduras where Antivirus won a recording contract and the production of their first music video.

Benhi !Khabeb is an ethnomusicologist, born and raised in Namibia, specializing in indigenous music past and present, through natural African roots composition. He plays many different indigenous instruments like the djembe, talking drum, kess-kess, calabash, and mbira. As a singer and keeper of the oral traditions and history of the Khoisan people of southern Africa, Benhi is regarded as a living instrument resonating the voice of the ancestors. Benhi participated as a musician many ELCA events over the years and serves occasionally during chapel services at The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.