

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION



United in Doing God's Work

The Rev. Kristina Johnson admits she had been “feeling discouraged” the day the enormous box arrived from the ELCA churchwide organization.

Pastor Johnson is the mission developer for Iglesia Luterana La Vela, a Spanish-speaking new start in Greensboro, N.C.

Getting a new congregation on its feet is an exhausting undertaking, Pastor Johnson notes.

“You feel the whole thing is on your shoulders, and [that] you’re either going to get it right or get it wrong.”

But the moment Pastor Johnson saw what was in the box and read the note tucked inside, those feelings were replaced by a lump in her throat and a “tinge of love” in her heart.

La Vela is one of 24 new ELCA congregations that received a communion vessel set commissioned for use at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Each vessel was hand-made of natural and recycled materials by local artisans of fair-trade companies. The global

origin—including Uganda, Palestine, Bangladesh and Guatemala—serves as a reminder of the universal nature of God’s work.

“When we [at La Vela] learned about the faraway places these gifts came from, we felt like God was working through all channels of the world to embrace this little tiny mission,” Pastor Johnson says. “It was like God was saying, ‘You can do this.’”

Pastor Johnson has used the communion vessels weekly since receiving “this amazing gift” and reports that her members have been visibly moved by the meaning behind the handcrafted beauty. Irina Ortega, La Vela’s sacristan, who is originally from Peru, agrees.

“We’re so far away from India, Guatemala, Africa ... But these things that were sent to us bind us to them. [The gift] unites us with other Christians all over the world.”

And with all the members of the ELCA.

STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION



United in Doing God's Work

The Rev. Kristina Johnson admits she had been “feeling discouraged” the day the enormous box arrived from the ELCA churchwide organization.

Pastor Johnson is the mission developer for Iglesia Luterana La Vela, a Spanish-speaking new start in Greensboro, N.C.

Getting a new congregation on its feet is an exhausting undertaking, Pastor Johnson notes.

“You feel the whole thing is on your shoulders, and [that] you’re either going to get it right or get it wrong.”

But the moment Pastor Johnson saw what was in the box and read the note tucked inside, those feelings were replaced by a lump in her throat and a “tinge of love” in her heart.

La Vela is one of 24 new ELCA congregations that received a communion vessel set commissioned for use at the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly.

Each vessel was hand-made of natural and recycled materials by local artisans of fair-trade companies. The global

origin—including Uganda, Palestine, Bangladesh and Guatemala—serves as a reminder of the universal nature of God’s work.

“When we [at La Vela] learned about the faraway places these gifts came from, we felt like God was working through all channels of the world to embrace this little tiny mission,” Pastor Johnson says. “It was like God was saying, ‘You can do this.’”

Pastor Johnson has used the communion vessels weekly since receiving “this amazing gift” and reports that her members have been visibly moved by the meaning behind the handcrafted beauty. Irina Ortega, La Vela’s sacristan, who is originally from Peru, agrees.

“We’re so far away from India, Guatemala, Africa ... But these things that were sent to us bind us to them. [The gift] unites us with other Christians all over the world.”

And with all the members of the ELCA.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

For more *Stories of Faith in Action*,
visit www.livinglutheran.com.
Do you have a story to share?
E-mail us at stories@elca.org.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

For more *Stories of Faith in Action*,
visit www.livinglutheran.com.
Do you have a story to share?
E-mail us at stories@elca.org.