



September 2018 Message for Congregations and Lay and Rostered Leaders

Dear Beloved of God –

Immediately following the June 14-16, 2018 Synod Convention, the Synod of Alberta and the Territories was pleased to host a Global Consultation which included Companion Synod partners: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO), the South Carolina ELCA Synod, the SE Minnesota ELCA Synod, ELCA Global Mission staff and the Synod of Alberta and the Territories.

Bishop Atahualpa Hernandez from IELCO had requested the Consultation in order to further our conversation and deepen our expression of communion following the November 2016 International Consultation held in Peru.

As we gathered, the consultation participants often referred to the Emmaus story of the disciples walking together and Jesus coming among them. The global mission's accompaniment model is one of walking together in solidarity, side by side, practicing interdependence and mutuality, in service to God's mission. The values of the accompaniment model are interconnected, and include mutuality, inclusivity, sustainability, vulnerability and empowerment. The core purpose of these relationships, this accompaniment, is God's mission.

The devotions one morning focused on Revelation 7:9-12, "After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands" (vs. 9).

"Here," shared the devotion leader, "here in this text from Revelation we see God's dream of one global congregation. Gathered are the Colombians, those from the United States and Alberta. One global congregation speaking a multitude of languages. One global congregation standing before the throne and before the Lamb. Here we see God's vision. Here we see God's dream of one global congregation."

I experienced this one global congregation when together with Tricia (Ariza) Hoepfner from Ascension, Edmonton we facilitated our Synod Delegation's journey to Colombia July 26-August 7. Our journey, primarily to the rural congregations and ministries of IELCO outside of Bogota, was life-transforming as together we learned of the vast and important ministries: seniors, displaced, marginalized, children through visits to three of the four IELCO schools, single mothers, deaf children and youth, after school meals and homework assistance, various congregational ministries...and most importantly, the significance of relationships...meeting with the leadership of the Lutheran World Federation's World Services office, meeting most of the pastors of IELCO, worship, generous hospitality...one global congregation.

Personally, I was refreshed through the journey and the relationship within the delegation, and the conversations with many friends previously met in Colombia...dear dear friends. And refreshed in the values of family and relationships, faith and hospitality.

Global relationships are complex, and they require time and attention to sustain, but how life-giving as together we live into God's one global congregation dream.

In Christ Jesus –
Shalom,
+Bishop Larry Kochendorfer

“The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

Bishop Atahualpa and I in deep conversation...again.



Cathy and me with several of the graduating Grade 11 students and with several of the Grade 2 students – the Lutheran School at Sogamoso, Colombia.

