

What personal, health, family, or professional considerations need to be kept in mind as you think about serving in Ethiopia for three months (or more)? (If you wish a personal conversation about this with the Bishop, you are invited to make an appointment to do so.)

How open are you to be challenged or changed?

In what ways are you willing to share this experience when you return home?

After reading the attached article about accompaniment (see addendum 2), what images come to mind when you think of the words *companion* or *accompaniment*?

Qualities of Mission Personnel

Companion churches related to the ELCA often request that the ELCA fill particular positions where local personnel are not available for the assignment. These companions in ministry look to us for candidates who can live and work in a cross-cultural and cross-national context. The ELCA Division for Global Mission (DGM) has outlined several qualifications known to be desirable in those who participate in mission activities. The following characteristics are sought in people to serve in our companion synod with DGM and the La Crosse Area Synod:

1. Christian faith and a commitment to the mission of the church
2. Openness to various expressions of Christian faith and respect for people of other faiths
3. Respect for beliefs, values and customs of church and culture where assigned
4. Well developed interpersonal skills demonstrating understanding and compassion
5. Appropriate training/education/life experiences for the assignment
6. Ability to adapt to different standards and practices
7. Ability to work within the framework of a local administration
8. Adaptable and flexible, sense of humor, good physical and emotional health
9. As necessary and appropriate, capacity to learn another language
10. Live and serve in a way which reflects the vision and expectations of the ELCA, as a representative sent by the La Crosse Area Synod.

Approval Process and Expectations

1. A completed application (signature below).
2. A screening interview with a representative of the Global Mission Committee, the assistant to the bishop, and a nurse or a previous teaching pastor.
3. Orientation and approval by the ELCA Division for Global Mission (DGM).
4. Approval by the bishop (signature below).
5. Approval from your congregation (signature below).
6. Participation in the orientation for companion synod volunteers.
7. Willingness to live by the expectations and under the authority of the EECMY-Central Synod, the La Crosse Area Synod ELCA, and the ELCA Division for Global Mission.

I have prayerfully considered the opportunity to serve in the Central Synod and am requesting an interview. I recognize that there may be undisclosed challenges as well as blessings as a result of this service. I understand that I would go to our companion synod as a representative of the La Crosse Area Synod and the ELCA, and I am willing to live according to the expectations of this program.

Applicant Date

Bishop, La Crosse Area Synod Date

Congregational Council President Date

If this application is for a pastor in a multi-point parish, additional president signatures may be added below:

Addendum 1: Theology of Accompaniment

Our relationship with our companion synod, the Central Synod of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, is a relationship of two churches in accompaniment. Com is a Latin prefix meaning "with" and panis is the Latin word for "bread." As com-panion synods we break bread with one another.

This model of accompaniment frames our ecumenical relationship as churches who are one in Christ. We walk with each other. We pray with and for each other. We encourage each other in ministry in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We break bread together. We worship together. This means that our relationship is for mutual upbuilding of the church, which is the body of Christ.

To accomplish this, we as the La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA send visitors and volunteers to our companion synod in response to the invitation we receive from the Central Synod of the EECMY (Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus). Likewise, we as the La Crosse Area Synod of the ELCA invite visitors and volunteers sent by the Central Synod of the EECMY.

The process we use works through our Global Mission Committee and through the Division for Global Mission (DGM) of the ELCA, under the constitutional responsibility given to our synod's Bishop as the "chief ecumenical officer" of the synod. Visitors are sent by our synod and entrusted to the care of our companion synod. The form of our companion relationship is synod to synod.

In our companion synod visits, we entrust ourselves to God and to the gracious hospitality and care of our companion synod. We desire to care for this relationship and for the limited resources of personnel and of funds in our companion synod. Visitors from our synod go for the good of the Church at the invitation of our companion synod. As a visitor to our companion synod, you are the La Crosse Area Synod. You are the ELCA. This is hard for us as Americans: we just don't think about the communal ramifications of our actions; we just don't imagine ourselves as community; rather we usually imagine ourselves as autonomous individuals with individual rights and individual experience as the highest reality.

As Christians we hear the words of St. Paul speak to the image of individual and community as he writes, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (I Corinthians 12:27). St. Paul reminds us we are baptized into the body of Christ, into one body. He reminds us that everyone has a gift for the benefit of the body, that everyone no matter how insignificant remains a part of the body. Paul identifies various gifts God gives to individuals in the church and yet he says, "I will show you a still more excellent way" (I Corinthians 12:31).

Accompaniment brings us into this more excellent way. You are the salt of the community. You are yeast in the loaf, the one body of Christ. Accompaniment seeks out ways to develop the communal life as the body of Christ. Companionship, walking side by side, mutuality, giving and receiving, is focused in mutual prayer and building up.

This is hard for us. As Americans, we are used to doing whatever we feel like, and doing it now! We need to let go of "my idea of how it ought to be done" and trust the community, the relationship, the church. Our companion synod relationship is coordinated synod to synod, church to church, EECMY to ELCA. You are a servant of the body of Christ. You never go just individually yourself. You are baptized into one body. You are the church. You are invited by our companion synod. You are sent by our La Crosse Area Synod. Accompaniment-sharing bread together-is a wonderfully simple yet deeply transforming gift of God. We are companions. We are one in Christ.

Addendum 2: Teaching Pastors

1. The NCEC offers the following courses in a three-year diploma program. You will be asked to prepare for coursework using the NCEC curriculum and textbooks. Circle the courses in which you have strong abilities or interest. Cross out the courses in which you have limited abilities or interest.

Biblical Studies

Old Testament Introduction
Old Testament Exegesis 1 - Genesis
Old Testament Exegesis 2 - Amos
Old Testament Exegesis 3 - Psalms
Old Testament Exegesis 4 - Isaiah
New Testament Introduction
New Testament Exegesis 1 - Mark
New Testament Exegesis 2 –
Galatians or Romans
New Testament Exegesis 3 - John
New Testament Exegesis 4 – I
Corinthians or Pastoral Letters
Biblical Interpretation
Greek
Hebrew

Church History and Systematic Theology

Church History
Introduction to the Lutheran
Confessions
Introduction to World Religions

Pastoralia

Christian Education
Homiletics
Missiology/Church Growth

General Education

English
Study Methodologies/Library
Psychology
Social Science

2. The time commitment for teaching pastors is about three months (half a semester or one “block”) and should include at least two weeks prior to and following classes for travel, preparations, orientation, recording grades, make-up work, farewells, etc.
3. Funding:
 - a. The Ethiopia Companion Synod fund of the La Crosse Area Synod will provide airfare and a \$1000 allowance for phone, electricity, food and expenses in Ethiopia, including reimbursement for transportation costs as needed for preaching in the parishes of the Central Synod.
 - b. Your congregation will continue to provide your salary and benefits.
 - c. The Central Synod and NCEC will provide housing in Nakamte, and one trip from the airport and back again at the conclusion. They will also arrange for your accommodations in Addis Ababa, but you are responsible for the expenses while there.
 - d. You will be expected to provide for your passport, vaccinations, spending money, and miscellaneous expenses. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have adequate medical insurance, including evacuation insurance for medical emergencies.
 - e. During your orientation by the ELCA Global Mission unit, please request assistance with securing a visa and health insurance.
4. If you are able to do fund raising before or after your trip, please encourage contributions for these purposes in this order of priority:
 - a. To the companion synod program of the La Crosse Area Synod which is covering your costs as listed in the previous section;
 - b. To the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, specifying the programs it sponsors in the Central Synod (two health clinics and the AIDS orphan program);
 - c. To take with you for institutions of the Central Synod (e.g. congregational offerings, parish care funds, or the NCEC care fund);
 - d. To the companion synod book fund of the La Crosse Area Synod.

5. Synod pastors will be encouraged to provide pulpit supply and pastoral care for your congregation.
6. A teaching pastor, with the recommendation and approval of the synod's bishop, may invite his/her spouse to join him/her (at their own expense) in Ethiopia after exams are finished. Such a visit must not distract the pastor from serving in the NCEC. This invitation does not extend to children of pastors.

Addendum 3: Nurses

Nurse for the EECMY Central Synod from the La Crosse Area Synod, ELCA¹

Job Description

Under the supervision of the Central Synod Health Coordinator, and in collaboration with the health section and clinic heads, this person shall:

1. network with the leaders in the local communities, PACs, service institution heads, religious organizations, and local government;
2. observe routine curative services in the church health institutions, routine preventative services of the church in the community, public health services in the settlement sites, and reproductive health services in various communities (Weredas);
3. participate in the supplementary feeding program for malnourished children;
4. prepare and deliver training sessions for
 - a. health professionals and clinic workers on various topics,
 - b. parents of malnourished children on nutrition,
 - c. local officials on environmental hygiene;
5. review and recommend improvements to the medical management system;
6. assist the Health Coordinator in planning and monitoring;
7. perform other duties as need arises; and
8. if permitted by the Ethiopian government,
 - a. assist in the treatment of patients in the clinics,
 - b. provide services to NCEC students a minimum of three times per week for approximately 1.5 hours each time.

Background

NCEC previously hired a nurse three times per week, for 1.5 hours each time, at 40-50 birr an hour. She dealt with common ailments, administered non-prescription drugs, educated students on hygiene and other health practices, and referred students to the hospital when necessary. This made it possible for students' medical allowance to stretch further. It will need to be determined if an American nurse can be certified to work in Ethiopia, and what paperwork will be necessary to accomplish that. (For reference, the wife of a previous director, Mats Bohman, was a nurse and was able to serve in her profession.)

Legal requirements

Volunteer positions in Ethiopia can last up to three months under a tourist visa from the Ethiopian government. Longer periods of service are possible with a work permit from the government.

As of 12/9/07

¹ This proposal was originally delivered from the Central Synod by Pastor Westphal at the conclusion of his sabbatical in early 2005. It is under revision.