



ELCA Joins in Lutheran Malaria Initiative Startup in Southern Africa

Lutherans in southern Africa and staff of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met in Johannesburg, South Africa, Jan. 11-15, to plan efforts to help prevent and control malaria, and to discuss building organizational capacity to meet the challenge.



The meeting was the first of a series of regional gatherings to plan for work in the "Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI)." The LMI is made possible in part through a partnership with the United Nations Foundation. The LMI is a partnership among the ELCA, Lutheran World Relief and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

The 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly authorized the continued development of LMI. It also asked that a report and recommendations for a possible churchwide LMI campaign be brought to the 2011 assembly. Pilot synods are currently engaging LMI, significant donors are being contacted, and global program aspects are being developed during this stage of the initiative, said the Rev. Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl, ELCA coordinator for the LMI, Office of the Presiding Bishop.

Lutherans from ELCA partner churches in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe attended, along with program personnel and bishops, said Megan Bradfield, associate director, International Development and Disaster Response (IDDR), ELCA Global Mission. The Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), a communion of 16 Lutheran churches, will coordinate the Lutheran response to malaria in the region.

The southern Africa gathering "stirs the momentum of the church to respond," Bradfield said. "Malaria is part of daily life in Africa. (People) often struggle with how they can respond. Parishioners die every year of malaria. This is a very real problem in their respective areas."

Malaria is a serious public health threat, and a threat to human and economic development, particularly in Africa. The World Health Organization reports nearly one million people die from it each year. Ninety percent of the deaths are in sub-Saharan Africa.

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- More information about the Lutheran Malaria Initiative is at <http://bit.ly/zqYQS> on the ELCA website

ELCA Youth Return to New Orleans in 2012

The Youth Gathering of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will return to New Orleans in 2012. Returning to a host city consecutively is unprecedented in the history of ELCA Youth Gatherings, according to Heidi Hagstrom, director for youth gatherings, ELCA Vocation and Education. The gathering will take place July 18-22, 2012.

Recognized as the largest event organized by the 4.6 million-member denomination, the ELCA Youth Gathering is a triennial event that brings together tens of thousands of high-school-age Lutherans from across the country and overseas for leadership development, faith formation, service opportunities and more.

In the summer of 2009 about 37,000 Lutheran teenagers, adult leaders and others gathered in New Orleans not only to paint and make home repairs but to learn about and experience the faith of people who live there. Residents of New Orleans and others along the U.S. Gulf Coast continue to recover more than four years after Hurricane Katrina.

"I don't think that we have learned all we can from New Orleans, yet," said Hagstrom. "New Orleans has so much to teach us about practicing God's hospitality. By paying attention to the spirit's activity in and through New Orleanians, I think we get a glimpse of God's intention for the whole world," she said.

The Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) and the Definitely Abled Leadership Event (DAYLE) will be held July 15-18.

DAYLE is a leadership event designed to "bless and empower" gifted young people with a range of physical, cognitive and emotional differences. MYLE is a "multi-ethnic and multi-generational" event designed to equip young leaders to help lead their congregations into "fuller inclusion as a diverse church in a diverse world."



Get it Online

- Information about the ELCA Youth Gathering is at www.ELCA.org/youthgathering
- Follow the event on Facebook at www.facebook.com/youthgathering



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