

Preparing Church Workers in Africa

Across Africa, God is providing Lutheran church bodies with growth, which has created a blessed challenge: They are having trouble providing enough well-trained pastors to shepherd new believers. These church bodies are increasingly turning to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) due to the Synod’s reputation for solid theological education.

One of the premiere places this education occurs is at Matongo Lutheran Theological College at Neema Lutheran College in western Kenya. This seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) has about 80 students who come from a dozen different church bodies. Two LCMS missionaries — the Rev. Dr. Walter Steele and the Rev. Vance Becker — serve alongside Kenyan faculty and staff.

“Placing missionaries into this sweet spot for the LCMS — the teaching of the faith to the next generation of pastors — multiplies the impact among God’s people in villages and towns across the continent,” says the Rev. Shauen Trump, director of the Synod’s Africa region.

Kelvin Lenaseyan is one of the students studying at Matongo. Lenaseyan’s father was the first person in his village to be baptized when missionaries came to Samburu, Kenya, in 1982. Unfortunately, now many of the local men have stopped attending church. Lenaseyan hopes to be ordained soon so that he can draw his



Top left: The Rev. Dr. Walter Steele, LCMS missionary, works with student William Saitaga at Matongo Lutheran Theological College at Neema Lutheran College in Kenya. **Right:** The Rev. Philemon Adoyo distributes the Sacrament during worship at the Othoro ELCK parish in western Kenya with student Kelvin Lenaseyan assisting in the distribution. **Bottom left:** The Rev. Vance Becker, LCMS missionary, teaches at Matongo Lutheran Theological College.

neighbors back to the church and provide regular Word and Sacrament ministry in the village.

At Matongo, Lenaseyan gets hands-on training alongside classroom instruction. He recently had the opportunity to practice his preaching skills during morning chapel, and later he traveled with a supervisor to the ELCK’s Othoro Project 24 site to assist with worship for the 25 children who live there.

Lenaseyan also is studying Greek and Hebrew with Steele, even though it was not required.

“These languages will help you not only to translate the Word, but they will help you in your ministry as a pastor,” Lenaseyan says.

The LCMS and her missionaries rejoice in the opportunities to teach students who will then go out and serve their local communities. “God’s people are the focus of this and all of the LCMS’ mission work,” says Trump. This includes both “those people in the community of believers and those who have not yet heard the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Give God Glory...

... for the many volunteers who served at the 2022 Youth Gathering, which was held July 9–13 in Houston. It takes many hands to stuff backpacks, distribute materials, share artistic gifts, lead servant events, and support and guide the 19,000 registered participants and adult leaders. We give thanks to God for providing these faithful and joyful servants.



to make Lutheran theology and worship

resources available throughout Asia. Recently, he worked on translating two works by C.F.W. Walther as well as a lecture series on the fundamentals of the faith. Learn more about the Jastrams at lcms.org/jastram.

... for Forged by Fire, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization located in Covington, La. Led by Pastor Paul Ernewein, Forged by Fire is a disaster relief organization that helps feed victims, volunteers and first responders involved with regional emergencies and natural disasters. When not responding to a disaster, Forged by Fire also provides meals for the homeless and at community service events and holiday events. Learn more at fbf501c3.com.

One of the priorities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith. This is accomplished under the familiar name of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, which the Synod uses to describe the mercy work directed by the policies of the Boards for National and International Mission and implemented through the programs of the Offices of National and International Mission.

“Sharing” is the newsletter of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295. Contributor services line: 888-930-4438. Website: lcms.org.

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison	Ext. 1402
President	
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod	
Christian J. Boehlke	Ext. 1311
Interim Executive Director	
LCMS Office of International Mission	
Rev. Robert M. Zagore	Ext. 1730
Executive Director	
LCMS Office of National Mission	



THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
MISSOURI SYNOD

You Make the Difference through LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You make the ministry described in this newsletter possible! Your prayers and contributions to World Relief and Human Care “Where Needed Most” help deliver our Savior’s mercy to people in need. You bolster tightly restricted donations from others to help fully fund important mercy projects, allowing us to report here the impact you are making in Christ’s name. The courtesy envelope in this issue allows you to send a future contribution as the Holy Spirit leads, when He leads.

Supporting Life in a Pro-Abortion State

Illinois generally, and the Chicago metropolitan area specifically, is often referred to as the abortion capital of the Midwest. Abortion on demand is prevalent throughout the state, and in 2019 abortions there jumped 10% — to more than 46,500 — over the prior year, according to a May 2021 article from the *Chicago Tribune*.

Yet, the battlefield where we appear weakest is precisely where Christ is strong. Many congregations across The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's (LCMS) Northern Illinois District (NID) sponsor or support pro-life programs, such as pregnancy resource centers. The district's pro-life Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs) include AbleLight (formerly Bethesda Lutheran Communities), which serves people with developmental disabilities; multiple senior residential volunteer and chaplain services; Lutherans For Life; and an expansion of Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries' maternity home ministry, which originated in Sanford, Fla. In addition, the NID's Life Task Force offers resources and education.

These opportunities are a blessing to the church, especially in the era of COVID-19. Instead of remaining mired in helpless frustration, the church focuses on what the Lord has promised. "We don't know what the Holy Spirit will do," said the Rev. Dr. Allan Buss, president of the NID. "We lament for the state of the world — we need to stand for the truth, repudiate evil — but as the psalmist says: Trust the Lord



Left: A family picks out clothing at the Breakfast with Baby event on May 21, 2022, at Our Savior Lutheran Church, Carol Stream, Ill. **Right:** Lutherans attend the March for Life Chicago rally and march on Jan. 8, 2022, in Chicago.



"What we always want to stress is what we're for: We're for life, we're for family, we're for grace and helping people."

— Deaconess Lori Trinché



and do good. Every person we serve is a person Christ died for."

As Stewardship, Administration and Human Care liaison for the NID, Deaconess Lori Trinché works with RSOs. Their newest project is the expansion of Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries into Illinois. The area is ripe for a maternity home ministry, which not only offers a home for pregnant, unwed mothers and teaches them life skills but, most importantly, is connected to an LCMS congregation. Residents attend weekly worship, where they learn about Christ and find out that they are valuable.

Mercy work, undergirded by the Word, blesses the church. Excited by the project, congregations that shut down in-person activities due to tight pandemic restrictions are beginning to reconnect with one another and the district.

"What we always want to stress is what we're for: We're for life, we're for family, we're for grace and helping people. Meeting people where they are. That's what Jesus does for us," Trinché explained. "If we can model that ... shower them with love and grace, it breaks down those walls, those polarizing things that [tear] us apart."

Caring for Women and Children in Crisis

AS I WRITE, we are expecting *Roe v. Wade* to fall at any moment. In 1973, the Supreme Court found a right to abortion in the U.S. Constitution by a dubious reading. While it struck down most anti-abortion laws of the states, it did allow for certain protections to be legislated by states after the point of "viability." Now this ruling, which has produced 63 million abortions and caused the U.S. to promote abortion in various ways around the world as official policy, has finally had to face the science. The development of the ultrasound and other technologies have taught the American people about the development of unborn babies.

But this does not mean that abortion will end in the United States. Far from it. About 26 states will severely limit or outlaw abortion altogether when *Roe* falls. However, in states like Illinois and New York, it will be pedal to the metal. Those states have been busy eliminating any impediments to abortion whatsoever, at any time in the pregnancy.

It has never been more important for LCMS congregations to be involved in caring for women and children in crisis pregnancy situations. The church is a home for sinners, not

perfect people. That word, "sinner," includes each one of us. Jesus slays the little hypocrite inside each of us when He says, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). "Christ dwells only in sinners," Luther wrote to a friend. One of the greatest heresies and falsehoods we experience today is the denial of God's role as Creator. A person who bears the very image of God and for whom the Second Person of the Trinity became man cannot be murdered without grave insult to God Himself. Our heavenly Father creates us male and female, down to every nucleus of every cell of our bodies. Rejection of that wondrous fact is a rejection of Christ. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). By loving with the fire of the divine love, by loving in word and deed, we are God's own lips, hands and feet of love.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Matthew C. Harrison".

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

