

Making **D**IFFERENCE
NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD, EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

GLOBAL MISSION EVENTS

Dare to be astonished, amazed

What word describes your relationship with God?

If you did not pick *astonished* or *amazed*, apply for a Northeastern Iowa Synod grant to attend a Global Mission Event.

Powerful

Darlene and Harlan Riggle from Zion, Clear Lake, applied for grants to attend the Global Mission Event in Montana last July.

Darlene said, "Harlan and I are so thankful we could be part of a Global Mission Even, because we were astonished and amazed.

God continues to amaze and astonish us with what He is doing in the world."

She quotes Michael

VIDEO STARS *Davey and Goliath* delight Darlene Riggle, Zion, Clear Lake. Riggle sees God's hand working through the ELCA projects she learned about at the Global Mission Event in Bozeman, Montana.



HARLAN RIGGLE

Yaconelli's book *Dangerous Wonder*. He writes, *The greatest enemy of Christianity may be people who say they believe in Jesus but who are no longer astonished and amazed.*

"It was a wonderful four days with powerful things happening to change us," Darlene said.

Grants

The time to put a Global Mission Event on your schedule is now before your calendar fills. Go as an individual, go as a family, or go as a group.

The next Global Mission Events take place at North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota, July 14-17, 2005, and the Baltimore Convention Center, Maryland, August 25-28, 2005.

Last summer, 52 persons from Northeastern Iowa attended events using 17 grants from the synod's global mission work group. The grants totaled \$3,150. Thirteen grants went to individuals, three to families, and one to Bethany, Iowa Falls' confirmation class, a group of 31 people.

What happens at a Global Mission Event?

Ninety-five sessions presented by informed, hands-on people helped us learn what is happening in the ELCA. We were able to choose and attend fourteen sessions.

We experienced guest speakers at morning and evening devotions—perfect ways to start and end each day. There were four general sessions, a Globalfest, and a Eucharist Service. Preceding each was a global sing-along when we learned rhythms and words of songs from around the world. The Brick Breeden Fieldhouse contained an amazing rotating sphere a young man created from satellite images.

Children were well cared for, with age-specific sessions and fun things to do.

We give the planners an A+ for the food those four busy days.

—Darlene and Harlan Riggle, Zion, Clear Lake

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Editor Elaine Main

“The work group recognizes the quality of the events,” said Rev. Nancy Larson, assistant to the bishop, who facilitates the group. “They inspire the people who attend and, when they return home, they enliven their congregations.”

Justice

A group from Trinity, Mason City, attended the Global Mission Event in Milwaukee last July.

“This is the church I want to be part of,” one participant said. “It’s a church that’s searching for justice and in touch with issues in the world. It is not a naive church. A presenter pointed out that if your congregation is not addressing justice issues as part of its mission, the congregation is not alive.”

Global issues keep a congregation connected.

“A congregation can feel that the churchwide organization is disconnected from it,” she said. “However, maybe it’s the congregation that’s disconnected; maybe it’s disconnected from the *world*.”

Riggle said, “Worshipping with fellow believers from all over the world puts a different slant on the meaning of *the church*. You experience in words and actions how God uses the church for mission. It’s uplifting.”



RESOURCES are available for congregations interested in promoting justice issues. Contact Loretta Horton, ELCA social ministry for congregations, phone 800/638-3522, ext. 2404. *Becoming involved in justice issues enlivens a congregation, report members of Trinity, Mason City—(from left) Darold Blazek, James Clausen, Andrew Clausen, Sharon Magelssen, Leanne Clausen, Janelle Nevermann, and Le Nevermann.*

Saints

At Global Mission Events, you meet respected mission leaders of the ELCA. One is Mary Jensen, according to Cecil Maureen and Rev. Milton Johnson. They heard Jensen describe her work with Bishop Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan, Palestine, and Israel. They say news from those countries is now more meaningful to them.

“The church there has six congregations and six schools,” Cecil Maureen Johnson said. “It is very hard for students and teachers to concentrate and study in the middle of military occupation. Going to school surrounded by tanks and soldiers is a challenge.”

The Johnsons encourage prayer for the Lutheran church in the Holy Land and for Palestinian children.

“We pray that they may have hope and a future free from oppression,” Cecil Maureen said.

Cecil Maureen is a member of St. Peter (Richfield), Sumner. Her husband is pastor of that congregation and of St. John (Stapleton), Waucoma.

Just like Paul

Karen Peters, Zion, Clear Lake, says she “fell in love with all God’s people” at the event in Bozeman, Montana, her first Global Mission Event. She remembers Ana.

“Ana was a librarian for

THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR, one of many Global Mission Event activities for younger participants, delights worshippers at the closing worship in Milwaukee.



BETH OLSON

AT GLOBAL Mission Events, you meet dedicated people like Ana. She's taught in Tanzania and attends at least one Global Mission Event every year; some years, she attends two.



many years in Long Beach, California,” Peters said. “She never married but rather, like

Paul, filled her life doing many things for the Lord. She traveled to Tanzania in her 50s and taught in a village above 17,000 feet in elevation. Her bright blue wrap is from that trip. Now in her 80s, her eyes sparkle as she proudly says, ‘I’ve attended all 25 Global Mission Events and even went to a couple in the same year. I’ve actually been to 28.’ What a delightful witness.”

Giving back

Participants leave a Global Mission Event with a renewed sense of responsibility.

Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson said, “Claimed by God’s grace means that life is a gift, not a possession. Yes, God grants us great freedom, but with God’s claim upon us in grace, God also gives us great responsibility for which God will expect great accountability.”

Hanson urges us to “stand in solidarity with those in poverty and with others wherever there is suffering in the world.”

Global Mission Events help us stand together.

Choices

Rev. Beth Olson, Messiah, Janesville, said, “My experience at the Global Mission Event reminds me that I, as someone of enormous material wealth and privilege, have a deep and abiding responsibility to make a difference in the world. While I may not

AUDRA AND Rev. Robert Lehmann, Holy Trinity, Dubuque, say all their expectations of a Global Mission Event were met in Milwaukee—great learnings, fun, reunions, and inspiration.



be able to change the world, my choices make a difference in the lives of many.

“It isn’t enough simply to send money and quilts and Lutheran World Relief kits overseas. I must make choices in my own life that make a difference. I can use fair trade products, shop, eat, and use resources responsibly. I can support farmer’s markets, thrift stores, and local merchants.

“I can write letters to congress people and demand justice and fair trade policies. I can ask that we use as a measure of our wealth how we care for the poorest in our midst.

“The Global Mission Events show how vast and broad this amazing church is. They show that our mission dollars go farther when we give them through the church than when we give them directly. We know how to stretch our mission dollars into monies that make a life-giving, life-sustaining, and life-enhancing difference in the lives of countless people around the world.”

Vacation

“The idea of Global Mission Events—one of the best things about the ELCA—is also one of the best-kept secrets when it comes to family vacation possibilities,” Olson said. “Our family attended the event in Milwaukee this year, our second Global Mission Event. We came away from both programs thrilled by the global interaction that occurs.

“To hear our daughter tell of places such as Liberia, Madagascar, Colombia, Slovakia, China, and Zimbabwe—and of children’s lives in those places—gives courage and hope that our children will have the global perspective necessary to build bridges for peace and harmony. What were you talking about when you were eight years old?”

The events pride themselves on being family friendly. Special programming encourages children and youth to become involved and childcare is available when parents attend major events.

Youth groups are welcome. Bethany, Iowa Falls' confirmation class, attended the Milwaukee event together (see the October 2004 issue of the *STAR*) and returned determined to promote fairly traded coffee.

Rev. Darrel Gerrietts, assistant to the bishop, says, "Congregations that take their youth to Global Mission Events get prepared packages. The programming is done for you. Accommodations are arranged. Meals are served. All you must do is bring your group."

Then take them home astonished and amazed and watch them—and other congregation members who attend Global Mission Events—enliven the congregation.

—*Elaine Main, editor,*
with help from Sharon Magelssen, Trinity, Mason City

ARIANA GREMMELS OLSON (center), daughter of Revs. Beth Olson and Robert Gremmels, talks knowledgeably about countries such as Liberia, thanks to children's programming at Global Mission Events.



BETH OLSON

Your turn to make a difference

Contributions to the Northeastern Iowa Synod help congregations become astonished and amazed about God's work. The synod's global mission work group creates ways to understand and participate in ELCA global missions, such as Global Mission Event grants described in this publication. It promotes ongoing accompaniment with our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia.

For information

Gifting synod ministries

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Global Mission Event grants and companion synod relationship

Rev. Nancy Larson
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Plan now to attend 2005 Global Mission Events



a day's drive northwest in
Fargo, North Dakota
July 14-17, 2005

a two-day drive
east in
*Baltimore,
Maryland*
August 25-28,
2005

Theme—
Gathered by God's Grace

web site <www.elca.org/gme/index2005>
phone 800/638-3522, ext. 2642