

PART III: For ELCA Congregations

Congregations play an important part in creating support among ELCA members for a companion synod relationship. The more members that embrace the relationship, the more successful it will be.

Begin creating a strong congregational program by reviewing the information in Parts 1 and 2.

Building interest

1. Contact the chair or coordinator of your companion synod committee to discover how your congregation can get involved, or to see if there are opportunities for individuals to participate in the companion synod committee. Ask about information or educational materials you can use, and upcoming events or trips you can participate in.
2. Form a congregational task force or committee to focus on the relationship. To keep its work fresh and energized, stagger terms to mix new and experienced members. Your participation will be stronger when a wide range of people has served on the task force.

Learn about your companion

- Find out as much as you can about the country of your companion, using resources from local libraries or from the ELCA Global Mission companion profiles, which offer country and church information, craft ideas, maps and recipes.

→ See www.elca.org/companion_profiles. (The links to crafts, recipes and maps may be temporarily disconnected in some of the profiles.)

- Ask the confirmation class to research the country and church and present the information to younger classes.
- Hold an adult forum on the companion, perhaps focusing on the political issues and concerns in that country.
- Invite younger children to make crafts from the region using instructions in the ELCA Global Mission companion profiles or craft books from local libraries.
- Incorporate crafts and what you have learned into a bulletin board and a shelf or table that displays photos and fabrics from your companion, includes the name of the bishop, and highlights country information as well as your companion's ministries.

Remember your companion in worship

- Lift up the bishop and church leaders in prayer.
- Pray for needs specific to that region of the world.
- Pray for women and children.
- Use prayers from your companion.
- Sing hymns from that region of the world. Use the instruments that they might use.
- Use "Prayer Ventures" online at www.elca.org/prayerventures.

Taste and see!

- Host a coffee hour highlighting regional food of your companion.
→ See ELCA Global Mission companion profiles or international cookbooks for recipes.
- Is your companion in a coffee-growing region? Contact Lutheran World Relief or another agency that sells fair-trade coffee to serve.

Creating personal relationships

Visit your companion

Contact your companion synod chairperson to see what trips are being planned. If a group from your congregation wishes to visit, be sure to talk to the companion synod chairperson about what other groups might be going, whether there is an invitation from your companion, and whether your companion is able to support your visit.

Make sure that any visit has a purpose and goal.

→ See *Part IV* for detailed orientation and trip planning.

Invite visitors

Personal encounters move us beyond stereotypes to discover the humanity and soul of individuals from another culture. Inviting someone to share in an anniversary celebration or vacation Bible school, or to witness and contribute to the ministry of your congregation can be a life-changing experience for all involved.

Consult with your companion synod chairperson before making plans to coordinate a visit with a delegation visiting the synod. Expect to pay airfare, airport taxes, room, board, insurance and a stipend if your visitor is coming from a country with a low per-capita income.

→ See *Part V* for details on hosting visitors.

Communicate ... in other languages!

If you need assistance translating a letter from or composing a letter in another language, you can probably find assistance locally.

- Try the foreign language department in your local high school, college, or university.
- Find out whether there are foreign students at a university or seminary who could translate.
- A private language school or immigrant or ethnic societies may also be able to assist.
- Contact ELCA Global Mission to ask about former missionaries who may be able to help.

In all cases, ask about translation fees.

Sister congregation program

Some ELCA synods establish a program that matches congregations in that synod with congregations in their international companion. Contact your companion synod chairperson to learn if your synod has a process for establishing and maintaining a sister congregation relationship.

→ See *Part II, Establishing a congregation-to-congregation program*.

ELCA Missionary sponsorship

Missionary Sponsorship makes it possible for our 225+ ELCA international personal to teach, preach, heal, nurture, grow and build in almost 50 countries. Covenant sponsors make a commitment to support a specific missionary prayerfully, financially, and with regular communication.

Congregations report being renewed and invigorated by the relationships, global awareness and evangelical spirit that result from their missionary sponsorship. ELCA Missionary Sponsorship makes a *global* world of difference.

One hundred percent of the gifts offered for ELCA Missionary Sponsorship—either for a specific missionary or for "where needed most"—are used as designated. Almost all of our missionaries are in need of additional sponsorship.

Find stories, devotions and bulletin inserts at www.elca.org/handinhand. Learn more at www.elca.org/missionarysponsorship.

Contact the Global Mission Support team (the Rev. Twila Schock, Sue Edison-Swift and Kathleen West) by calling 800-638-3522, ext. 2657, or e-mailing globalmissionsupport@elca.org.