

Companion Synod Relationship: N/WLM Synod and the Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras (ICLH)

Initiated in 1996, the companion relationship between the Lutheran Church in Honduras and the N/WLM Synod of the ELCA has modeled growth through ministry together.

Companion Relationship Highlights

1998-2002

- Companion relationship was established.
- Teams traveled to Honduras for Habitat for Humanity and concurrently made brief contact with the ICLH.

January 2004

- MI delegates, John Fox & Vicky Carron visited the ICLH to explore ways to grow this companion relationship.
- They visited five congregations and learned strengths and challenges of the communities.
- They learned of local health clinics with inadequate resources; poor knowledge of preventative health practices; common problems of women's poor self-esteem, domestic abuse and AIDS.
- Revealed a, young church with solid faith and commitment to ministering to the needs of the poor.
- Discovered ICLH dream to provide more effective community health support.

September 2005

- Salud Para La Vida: Health for Life was launched.

We have a note indicating we would hire a social worker (Glenny at the time) part time as project coordinator for the Health for Life Project. Date:7-1-2005

September 1-8, 2005

- Michigan delegation/Team: Vicky Carron, Project Leader, Teresa Burdick, Sheryl Cleland, Charles Converse, Dr. John Fox, Bill and Sara Gregor and Kathy Powers
- Visited two hospitals (San Felipe and Escuela Public Hospital) and Divanna health clinic in Tegucigulpa, worshiped in church/homes in Divanna, San Francisco and Nueva Suyapa ; Kindergarten in La Canada; Training of Health Assistants (15 woman and 5 children) at Loma Linda on Holistic (integral) Health, Handwashing, Nutrition, and Hydration Formula. Gifts to health assistants medical kits.

March 16-22, 2006

- Michigan delegation/Team: Vicky Carron, Project Leader, Sheryl Cleland, Ellen Petre, Kathy Towers, Asst. to Bishop John Schleicher, others_____
- Stay included Tegucigulpa and San Pedro Sula (2 team members stayed another week)
- Reviewed Holistic Health – the Golden Rule, New: Unconditional Love – Prodigal Son, and Forgiveness (handwashing service)

2007

- Financial support increased to provide the needed full-time coordinator for *Salud Para La Vida*.
- Women of the ELCA awarded grant to support Salud Para La Vida.
- Kindergarten Snack project was initiated.

March 14-22, 2007

- Michigan delegation/Team: Vicky Carron, Project Leader, Kwaghdoo Bossuah, Phyllis Lindsay, Justin Ruehs, Asst. to Bishop John Schleicher, Cherry Talsma, Debbie Vogt
- Training of the 15 Health Assistants included Review, Self-care (avoid burnout) Christ cared for Himself, Listening, Creation (stone soup) Gospel Story-bracelet activity.

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March 5-12, 2008

- Michigan delegation/Team: Project Leader tasks divided up; Pastor Karen Biggerstaff, Dr. John Fox, Bill and Sara Gregor, Bob and Linda Grindahl, Gail Kueffner-Haw, Dr. Bob Mallen, Lois Neves, James Smith
- Two-day Health Clinic (200 patients) held in San Pedro Sula El Buen Pastor (church). It was the consensus of the team and Josefina that we would not do another clinic—no long term benefit to the community.
- Travel to Mt. of Olives Church for baptism of 2 children; met Health Assistants at National Park and Camp Los Pinos and Lake. Training for Health Assistants on “spiritual Needs of the Terminally Ill” (Kubler-Ross). Health Assistants did sociodramas demonstrating what they had learned.

May 2009

- MI hosted summit with delegates from the ICLH and two other synods in companion relationship with the ICLH
- ICLH presented their innovative plan for a more lay-empowered church

June 2009

- Coup d'état flares political unrest; Honduran violence escalates. 2009 trip canceled due to political unrest.

November 2009

- ICLH elects first native Honduran church president

2010

- Participants: John & Linnea Fox, Teryima Hemben, Suurnen Bossuah, Vicky & Claire Carron, Bob & Spencer Taylor
- Built relationships, especially MI youth and ICLH youth
- Water filter project launched and participated in the delivery of the first water filters to families.
- Planted trees in La Canada with the kindergarten students and church leaders.
- Developed video clips.

March 2011 – Support and Accompaniment with ICLH in Tegucigalpa and surrounding areas

- MI sends delegation to provide support during time of escalated violence, poverty and oppression.
- Bishop Schleicher, John and Linnea Fox, Lindsay Mack, Mike and Connie Lenkowski.
- Bishop Schleicher sends letter requesting call to action.

May 2011

- Northeast Minnesota hosted summit with delegates from the ICLH, the MI synod and New England

January 17, 2012

- Stephen Deal visits Saginaw.

March 21-28, 2012 – Synod trip to ICLH

- Michigan delegation/Team of 5 people went to teach a Salud Para la Vida Workshop and to film promotoras telling their stories
- Workshop topics: Teaching Christian service values, holistic health and wound care (physical and spiritual).
- A DVD was made of the trip.

March 13-19, 2013 – Synod trip to ICLH

- Michigan delegation/Team of 4 people went to offer support to the leaders and volunteers of ICLH.
- Topics: coping with violence; valuing yourself and your work

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November 14-18, 2013 – Consultation of Church Leaders for Renewed Relationships in Mission, Bogota Colombia

- Participants: Mike and Connie Lenkowski and representatives from Honduras, New England and NE MN.
- Result: 3 year plan for our relationship with Honduras.

March 19-26, 2014 – Synod Trip to ICLH – Health and Spiritual Accompaniment

- Michigan delegation/Team: Pastor John Schleicher, Pastor Paul Busekist, Dr. John Fox, Nurses Vicky Carron and Nancy Scott, Wendy Johnson and Kay Meints.
- Workshop topics: Spiritual Accompaniment and Diabetes Care.
- Visited homes and recorded testimonials on the Kindergarten Program and water filters.

March 18-24, 2015 – Synod Trip to ICLH – Health and Spiritual Accompaniment (Celebrated 10th Anniversary of the Synod Companion Relationship with the ICLH)

- Michigan delegation/Team: Pastor John Schleicher, Nurse Vicky Carron, Wendy Johnson and Connie Lenkowski.
- Workshop on cervical cancer at the clinic in San Francisco.
- Workshop on living water, presentation of a banner and 10th anniversary celebration at La Resurrection, Way of Emmaus and Santa Cruz de Yojoa. All churches sent at least one representative to one of the locations.
- Visited the pre-kindergarten program in La Canada. Made several home visits.

January 27-31, 2016 – Honduras Round Table

- Participants: Wendy Johnson and representatives from Honduras, New England and NE MN.
- Result:

March 9-15, 2016 – Synod Trip to ICLH – Dental and Spiritual Accompaniment

- Michigan delegation/Team: Janet Alcantara, Pastor Sara Cogsil, Kristine Fox, John Fox, Kara Gee, Mary Schmiedeknecht, Linda Stark and Turner Sytsma.
- Workshop on oral health for 35 health volunteers.
- Oral health presentation to the children in La Canada – pre-kindergarten school and 2nd graders.
- Workshop on love and compassion vs. stigma and discrimination.
- Several home visits in La Canada.
- First visit to the US Embassy – a topic discussed (as requested by ICLH) is immigration and human rights.

November 10-13, 2016 – Consultation of Church Leaders for Renewed Relationships in Mission, Lima Peru

- Participants: Bishop Satterlee and Wendy Johnson & representatives from Honduras, New England and NE MN.
- Result: 3-year plan for our relationship with Honduras.

August 9-11, 2017 – Summit, Lutheran Center, Chicago

- Participants: Linda Stark, Connie Lenkowski, 4 from Honduras, Stephen Deal, Paulina Dasse, representatives from New England and NE Minnesota.

August 12-21, 2017 – ICLH Visit to Michigan (Saginaw, Lansing and Grand Rapids)

- Participants from Honduras: Rev. Rolando Ortez, Luis Alfredo Matute, Besy Vargas and Gloria Erlinda Ramirez.

September 6-12, 2018 – Participatory Evaluation of Salud Projects (loss of ELCA funding)

- Participants: Linda Stark, Jamie Royalty, Connie Lenkowski, Max and Luis Quero.
- Participatory evaluation of Salud; home visits; dental workshop; visit RED Network; unity of teamwork.

March 14-21, 2019 – Health and Spiritual Accompaniment

- Participants: Linda Stark, Jamie Royalty, Janet Alcantara, Max Quero, Bryan Schneider-Thomas.
- Workshops: Effective strategies for working with less money and resources and adolescent pregnancy prevention. Also, home visits, first aid training, visiting the sick workshop, and visit with self-help group.

January 22, 2022 – Zoom Meeting on COVID: Spirit, Body and Mind

- Participants: Megan Crouch, Linda Stark, Jamie Royalty, Max Quero, Erika Dianis, Julie Hyatt, Connie Lenkowski
- 27 Honduran volunteers participated.
- Power Point focusing on COVID – spiritual, medical, and medical components.

June 18, 2022 – Zoom Meeting: Getting to Know You and Review of Diabetes and Hypertension Presentation

- Participants: Megan Crouch, Linda Stark, Jamie Royalty, Erika Dianis, Julie Hyatt, Connie Lenkowski, and Flor Garcia.
- Met with 15 volunteers – 12 new volunteers from 4 communities.

September 1, 2022 – SPLV gets a new coordinator, Gloria Isabel Rodriguez Garcia

November 2023 - LAC Consultation in Texas

- Participants - Megan Crouch, Linda Stark, 4 members from ICLH Leadership
- Gathered with other ELCA synods with partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean to reconnect after COVID and make plans going forward. An in person trip was planned for 2024, and quarterly Zoom meetings between the ICLH and their companion synods in the ELCA were set up.

April 2024 - Trip to Honduras and Health Workshop on Diabetes and Hypertension

- Participants - Megan Crouch, Linda Stark, Max Quero, Erka Dianis, Jamie Royalty, Hannah Cunninham
- Visited with ICLH Leadership and HIV/ Aids support groups in Tegucigalpa
- Home visits and visited the children's food program in Santa Cruz de Yajo
- Hosted workshop for 35 volunteers to provide training on Diabetes, Hypertension, volunteer self care, and helping create health habits. Training included practice with taking blood pressure, blood sugar, and drafting plans and ideas for how to help people make healthy changes in their lives. We also focused on self care for the volunteers.

Summer 2025- Synod Taste of Honduras Events

- Participants - Synod Honduras team
- Hosted three gatherings around the synod to help lift up the ministry we share with the ICLH throughout the synod. This included food, a presentation about the ministry we share, and opportunities for congregations to get involved.

April 17th -19th , 2026 - Round Table in Honduras

- Participants - Megan Crouch and Linda Stark
- Gathered in Honduras with delegates from all the organizations partnering with the ICLH including their companion synods in the ELCA, and their partners from Europe to coordinate ministry goals for the coming years .

April 20th -28th 2026 - Trip to Honduras and Health Training Workshop on basic First Aid

- Participants - Megan Crouch, Linda, Stark Erika Dianis, Bishop Julie Schnieder - Thomas, Ben Wheeler
- We plan to visit several communities, host a workshop teaching basic first aid to health volunteers and more. Check back for updates

To get involved in Salud Para la Vida or to get more information, contact:

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