

North/West Lower Michigan Synod Honduras Companion Program

Accompaniment

Accompaniment is defined as *walking together in a solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality*. It is a mutual relationship of listening and sharing talents and spiritual gifts while walking together in faith. Recognizing and embracing one another's gifts is part of our shared journey as the love of God is revealed to us. The ELCA lives out accompaniment in relationships with global companions, striving to share God's love and participate in God's mission together:

- **Mutually:** All of us have gifts to support God's mission. There is no mission *to*, only mission *with* and *among*.
- **Inclusively:** We seek to build relationships across boundaries that exclude and divide.
- **Vulnerably:** Just as Jesus became vulnerable to us, we open ourselves to others.
- **Empowering:** We seek to identify and correct imbalances of power, which may mean recognizing and letting go of our own.
- **Sustainably:** To ensure local ministries last for a long time, we seek to embed mission in ongoing relationships and communities.

<http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Global-Church/Global-Mission>

Companion Synods

Companion synods are church-to-church relationships between the ELCA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in countries around the world. There are over 120 such relationships in the ELCA Companion Synods Program, which allows thousands of Lutherans to connect, share joys and sorrows, pray together, and collaborate on mutually beneficial ministries.

Companion synods often form "flourishing, long-term, mutual relationships" that strengthen the worldwide Lutheran community as they deepen our global mission engagement. We can do more together than we can as individual congregations.

Honduras

The Companion Program between Iglesia Cristiana Lutherana de Honduras (ICLH) and the North/West Lower Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) began in 1998 when teams traveled to Honduras with Habitat for Humanity and made brief contact with ICLH. That first contact developed into a yearly trip to Honduras where Synod members serve as ambassadors for Christ who promote healthy living by educating health volunteers and by increasing access to life's basic needs.



9 minute video of the 2012 trip to Honduras:

<http://mittensynod.org/mission/global-mission/companion-synods/honduras/>



Health For Life (Salud Para la Vida)

Honduran Lutheran Church leaders had a vision for a sustainable health project. Along with members of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, Salud Para La Vida: Health for Life began in 2005. Through the mission of reconciliation and sharing of gifts, we can make a difference by:

Personal Involvement with ICLH:

- Teaching 60+ health volunteers ways to improve the health within their communities. (Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS workshops, wound care, diabetes concerns, etc.)
- Sending money to give nutritious lunches to a pre-school.
- Supporting the purchase of filters for safer drinking water.
- Offering spiritual enlightenment workshops to aid volunteers in their personal life and in contact with their neighbors.
- Funding dental care for children and health care for women.

Clean Water

Having clean drinking water is very important to maintaining healthy communities. Drinking clean water improves overall health by decreasing the use of sugary drinking and reducing illness and deaths associated with contaminated water. In 2010, the first 50 water filters were distributed in the poorest sector of Nueva Suyapa, a neighborhood in Tegucigalpa.

Since then, we have provided water filters to hundreds of families, with the goal of providing a water filter to every household in the community. After receiving a water filter, Health for Life volunteers provide the necessary education and follow up for effective use of the filters. The filters have a reported profound effect on the health of the community.



Kindergarten Meal Program

La Cañada is a rural village outside of Tegucigalpa where the local Lutheran congregation provides the only formal preschool education. Health for Life coordinators extend the church's health ministry by providing food for these kindergarten children whose families struggle to feed them.



For some children, this is the main food that they receive each day. Meals are prepared by the mothers of the children and are served five days a week during the school year. The mothers are taught basic cooking and health concepts, which they can also use at home. Since the implementation of this program, church leaders have noted improvements in the children's learning.

Travel Tips: http://www.sidewalkmystic.com/honduras_vacation_tips_3.htm