

Walking Together



Northern Illinois Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

A Word from Bishop Stacie Fidler

I turned 21 in Arusha, Tanzania. I had been selected to be one of the team that represented the Northern Illinois Synod on our initial visit to our companions in (at that time) the Arusha Diocese. It was an eye-opening, mind and heart expanding journey, taken between my college graduation and my first year of seminary.

That relationship, now with the North Central Diocese (NCD) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT), has continued and had ebbs and flows over the last 33 years (yes, yes, do the math). Post-covid, we are looking to once again deepen that relationship and build up our congregational and synod relationships.

Every synod in the ELCA has at least one companion. These relationships are rooted in “accompaniment,” which promotes the values of mutuality, inclusivity, vulnerability, empowerment, and sustainability. Through the program, companion churches and ELCA synods nurture and strengthen one another for life and ministry through prayer, study, communication, exchange of visitors, and sharing of resources.

Outside of our companion relationship with the North Central Diocese in Tanzania, we also have a relationship with Arcot Lutheran Church in India. This past August, along with Vice President Minnette Willard, I traveled for the consecration of Bishop Peter Paul Thomas. It was a trip that focused on building relationships, of showing up to celebrate with Bishop Peter Paul Thomas and the Arcot Lutheran Church.

As we live out being the body of Christ, it is important to show up for the important things, the celebrations and the painful things. To support one another and be reminded of the love that fills us as children of God.

It’s the same reason why our Northern Illinois synod staff are so eager to worship with your congregations on a regular basis. It is why I go to as many congregations as I can. We are in this journey together, following God-made-flesh in Jesus and living that same embodied faith for and with each other.

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God's work. Our hands.

On September 8th, congregations around the Northern Illinois Synod participated in "God's work. Our hands." Sunday. This day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

Many churches packed school kits for Lutheran World Relief, like First Lutheran Church in DeKalb who packed 652 kits after worship. First had spent the previous months collecting supplies, sorting them, and recruiting many hands to make the packing happen as quick as possible.

For Grace Lutheran Church in Wilmington, "God's work. Our hands." Sunday was more than just a day of service but rather created new connections in their community. A planning team led the congregation in gathering items for gift bags for the local nursing home. On a Sunday morning, their members created an assembly line for filling the bags, which included hygiene items, snacks, a Bible verse card, and a personal card with the church's information. A root beer float station was set up at the nursing home. Nursing home residents enjoyed their treat bags and root beer floats. In the month prior, members of Grace joined with members of United in Gardner to work the Food Share fest held at the Wilmington High School. Congregation members from both churches helped load food into cars for over 300 families on a hot summer day. Members at Grace are excited about connections they can make with other churches and outreach provided to their community.

As we open God's story, as we live as the body of Christ, we know we are called out in love to serve our neighbor. Do you have a story to share of how God is at work in your community? Send them to niscommunications@nisynod.org

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Congregational Resourcing Event

Saturday, March 22, 2025
Sauk Valley Community College

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P.O. Box 443
Moline, IL 61266

Synod Assembly

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Augustana College, Rock Island

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