

MESSIAH WELCOMES TWO OF ITS MISSIONARIES FOR AN ON SITE VISIT



Messiah had a rare opportunity to hear from and interact with two ‘real live’ missionaries on January 11, when **David Wunsch** and **Kate Lawler Wunsch**, ELCA husband and wife missionaries to South America, stopped by during their ‘stateside’ leave time. Thank you to the almost two dozen people who came out to meet this passionate, faithful and lively couple!

WHAT THEY SHARED

The Wunsches began with a reading of Luke 24—the story of the two disciples who walked along the road to Emmaus, sadly returning to their home from Jerusalem with the (mistaken) belief that Jesus had been crucified but not raised from the dead on the third day. They identified four liturgical movements to the story—**gathering** (when Jesus joined them unrecognized along the way), **word** (when Jesus opened up the Scriptures to them), **meal** (when he broke the bread in their home and was thus recognized as their resurrected Lord), and **sending** (where they returned with haste in the night to Jerusalem to tell the others the good news of Jesus’ resurrection and appearance). Then they proceeded, with PowerPoint slides and engaging stories, to tell their own story along these same lines of gathering, word, meal, and sending.

David and Kate discussed how we used to **gather** missionaries, namely from North to South, from so-called ‘educated’ and ‘civilized’ countries to so-called ‘developing’ countries, and how this way of gathering has changed with the growing understanding that both groups of people have much to offer each other. This way of doing mission today they called ‘accompaniment’—something involving mutual transformation through the Gospel. They discussed the wonderful ways that new understandings can come from reading and hearing the **Word** among folk whose experience is so radically different from your own. They noted that *companion* comes from *com-panes* which means, “with bread.” Thus, your companions are those with whom you break bread. **Meal** is so important, in other words, to growing deeper in relationship with those in and around your community. Besides, so many of those with whom they interact are hungry that the meal also becomes a basic necessity! Finally, they shared of a time of **sending** they experience every year, when the several young adults who have served over the previous year through “Young Adults in Global Mission” (see below!) were gathered with their mentors, local pastors and lay leaders in various South American churches. In and through Christ’s loving Spirit, these leaders had trained and formed them in ways that Kate and David, let alone those of us back in the U.S., could not. As a result, the leaders themselves felt an ownership of sorts in their young adult charges, wanting to know their investment of time, energy, blood, sweat and tears would not prove to be in vain. Kate recalls one of them asking her, “Kate, how are you going to use these young people back in the States?” How, indeed . . . how, indeed.

In conclusion, consider the mission David and Kate shared with us at their two presentations: “The *whole* Church bringing the *whole* Gospel to the *whole* world . . . that it might be *whole*.” What role might God be calling you—and Messiah—to play in accomplishing this mission? How might Jesus want to use YOU (and us!) as his hands and feet in the world he loves so much?

Feel free to email David (David.Wunsch@elca.org) and Kate (kathryn.lawler@elca.org) to offer them a word of encouragement and thanks!

Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM)

A One-Year International Opportunity for Adults aged 19-29



Application deadlines: Priority consideration is given to applications received by **February 15**.
All YAGM applications must be received by **March 1**.

The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program invites you to step out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself in a one year international mission service and learning opportunity. As you offer yourself in service, you will also learn more about yourself, your relationship with God, and your place in God's world. You will make friendships across culture and language that will change the way you look at the world. You will be a part of a group of young adults who are open to being transformed by your experiences, equipping you upon return to provide a global perspective on issues facing the church and society.

As this is a program of the ELCA for developing servant-leaders, we ask that you have a relationship to the ELCA (either as an ELCA member or connection through an ELCA church college, campus ministry or church camp), are between the ages of 19-29, willing to receive the gifts of others as well as to share your gifts, participate in an intentional process of service and learning, and live at a subsistence level to help meet needs worldwide. You will welcome the opportunity to gain new perspectives on life and work and to build relationships across culture, race, language and faith. Through your experiences, you will witness to your faith by the demonstration of the love of Jesus Christ in all relationships, a faith active in love, learning and service.

Go to <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/Engage-in-Global-Mission/Global-Service/Basics-of-Global-Service/Young-Adults.aspx> to learn more. Or contact ELCA missionaries David Wunsch (David.Wunsch@elca.org) and Kate Lawler Wunsch (kathryn.lawler@elca.org), both of whom interact with some of the YAGM each year in South America.

I cannot help but be amazed at how central the theme of community has shaped my year and my experience here...I am awed at the impact each and every individual has had on my life as well as the impact we have had on each other. I cannot help but view the Gospel now as God's desire to restore community to health, to help us realize our connectedness.

— Tom, Argentina