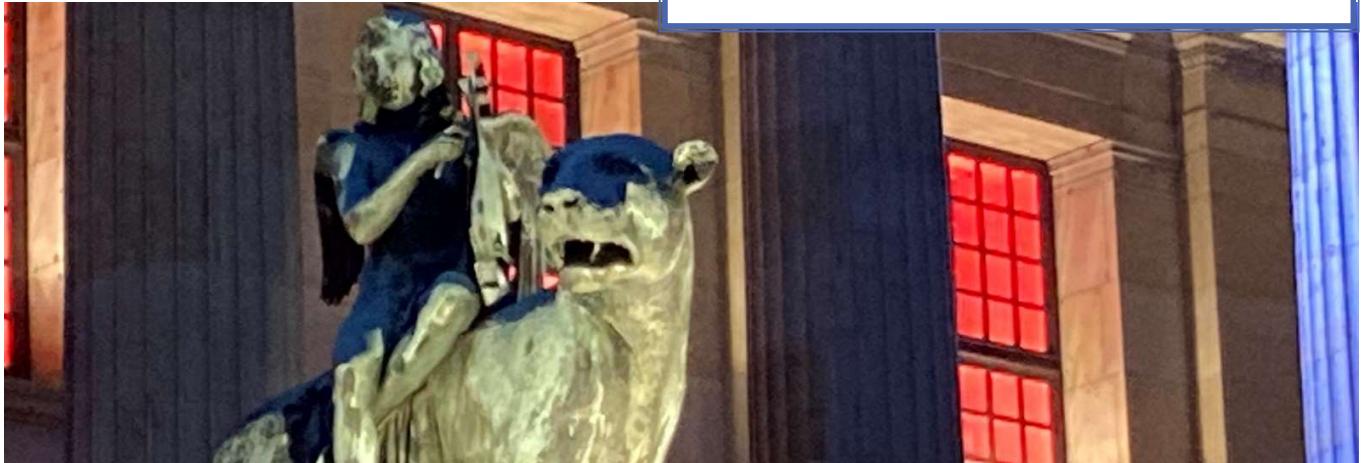


JANUARY 2021

## NACHRICHTEN AUS BERLIN



*Insights and experiences from ELCA missionaries Marissa and Viking Dietrich in Berlin where Viking serves as Regional Representative in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Global Mission.*

Dear Friends,

The Berlin Concerthaus (picture above) is closed. As are most places of entertainment, stores, and bars. Measures that were taken in Germany and throughout the European Union in response to increase rates of COVID 19 infections and rising mortality rates have remained in place as we begin the New Year 2021. In her New Year's speech, Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, said, *"I think I am not exaggerating when I say: never in the last 15 years have we found the old year so heavy and never have we, despite all the worries and some scepticism, looked forward to the new one with so much hope."*

As distribution of COVID vaccines begins around the world, there is much reason to hope 2021 will be better than 2020. Still with the events in America on Jan 6, the day of Epiphany, I saw people on social media lightheartedly saying they gave their subscription to 2021 a seven-day trial period and would like their money back! As I write today, on the day we remember Martin Luther King Jr, it is evident that there is much work to be done for injustices to be corrected and for peace to exist in the world.

As we begin the year celebrating Jesus's baptism, remembering our own baptisms, we hear Sunday lessons of the call to discipleship, the call to follow Jesus. We celebrate and remember the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives who convicts us of the need to repent and change, who helps us discern where in the world Jesus is working, where Jesus is healing the blind and liberating those oppressed by human systems, where Jesus is restoring hope to those who have been downtrodden by the realities of this world. May the light that is Christ guide our answers to daily challenges during this season of Epiphany.

Viking and Marissa

## End of Year Grant Awards

I would like to dedicate this edition to sharing news about End of Year Grants that were awarded by the ELCA to partners in the region of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. Each year as the fiscal year ends and in light of unspent allocations, Global Mission considers appeals from companion churches and partner organizations for funding of activities that are not a part of the approved annual budget. The Europe and Middle East Desks were busy in December and January corresponding with partners and facilitating their requests. Eleven grants were awarded as a result, some from Lutheran Disaster Relief and some from Diakonia and Development. Your interest in these projects and your prayers for their success is greatly appreciated!

### ELCA Lutheran Disaster Relief -International End of Year awards

- The Lutheran Church in Belarus received COVID 19 funding to provide relief to families impacted economically by COVID. The country of Belarus is in crisis and social assistance is disrupted. The realities of COVID alongside of the national crisis has threatened the continuance of the Lutheran Church in Belarus which is composed of only a handful of parishes and one ordained pastor, Vladimir Tatarnikov. The relief aid allowed the church to provide baskets to the larger community composed of food items, warm clothing and hygiene related items to children in the community.
- Bethany Evangelical Hospital is an interdenominational, protestant hospital in the poorest area of Naples. The Director, Cordelia Vitiello is also the Vice President and legal counsel of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy. This COVID 19 related grant is the second from the ELCA, the first one was made in March at the height of the crisis in Italy. Both grants are designed to help the hospital purchase Personal Protective Equipment for staff as well as to disinfect spaces within the hospital. See [the video about Bethany Hospital](#) prepared by the ELCA's Living Lutheran .
- The Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy manages a social service for refugees in Moscow called the Medical Advice Center. Refugees are not permitted to access public services, so the center is crucial for them. The COVID 19 related grant will allow the MAC to distribute hygiene articles and create possibilities for testing among their clients.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia is receiving a first time LDR grant, also COVID 19 related. This grant will allow them to purchase ventilation systems and hygiene articles for church buildings. The request me the humanitarian condition of nondiscrimination because these church venues are used by the general public for many things from AA gatherings to childcare to musical concerts.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land received an award for a three-pronged strategy in response to COVID 19. This is the first time ELCJHL applied and received a grant through our granting system, and it was the result of 4 months of conversation and training on grant designs. COVID has exacerbated economic issues in Palestine with now 75% unemployment. The church's income generating activities have really come to a halt. The schools of the ELCJHL are also in crisis because families cannot pay tuitions. Within communities, pastors are seeing the results of economic tensions within families including an increase in violence against women. The three-pronged approach includes: 1) support for schools to improve online learning and also to subsidize tuitions for selected families; 2) a community based program on gender justice concentrating on gender roles within families, and 3) an advocacy program of environmental justice and freedom movement of Palestinians.



### Diakonia and Development End of Year Awards

- United4Rescue. In 2019, the ELCA made its first contribution to this life saving effort of the Evangelical Church in Germany. Through United4Rescue, support is raised for rescue missions in the Mediterranean Sea. In 2020, the ELCA agreed to become recognized partners of this mission “to leave no one behind”, and a second contribution was made now at the end of 2020. See more at <https://www.united4rescue.com/das-schiff>
- The Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a program of Church World Service. The participants, Ecumenical Accompaniers volunteer for three months and work as a team to monitor human rights abuses at border crossings, form relationships with Palestinian Christian communities, and interpret their experiences to audiences in their home areas. COVID 19 prevented volunteers from deploying this year. This grant will help CWS restart the program and will help one ELCA member to participate. If you would like to apply, go to: <https://eappi.us/>
- The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees works in Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. DSPR health clinics in Gaza have seen an increase in clients during the COVID epidemic and their capacities are at their limit. This grant will enable the purchase of needed medications as well as PPE equipment for staff. You can learn more about DSPR at their very rich website: <https://dsprme.org/>
- The ELCA will also add a contribution to an effort by the DSPR to hold a series of six webinars concerning their work. These webinars already began in the fall with funding obtained from other churches. The ELCA grant will enable them to finish the series.
- The Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization in Novi Sad, Serbia, has recognized a need for more education among women in rural communities about early detection of cancer and how to access testing. This grant from the ELCA will provide support for 40 workshops over the next three years in 20 rural communities in the Vojvodina region.
- The Asylum Protection Center is the foremost agency for promoting the rights of refugees in the area of the Balkans. A new initiative they took last year was a Bakery that would train refugees and generate income for the work APC does throughout the camps in Serbia. COVID 19 negatively impacted the success of the bakery. This grant will allow APC to pursue new marketing strategies through social media and advertising to ensure the success of the bakery. (*picture from fall 2019 when Bakery was opening*)



- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, for several years has an outreach program among poor people in the area of Lake Balaton. In the past, this project has centered on “backyard” farming including pig raising and music education for children. This year, the church will shift this project toward the production of crafts “weaving and pottery” which they believe will enhance income generation for those participating as well as raise awareness within the church of the plight of marginalized Roma population. This grant will enable the church to renovate and prepare the location where the activities will take place.

## KEEP IN TOUCH...

### WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Marissa and I share our news in these bi-monthly newsletters to give you an up-close look at our church's work in Europe and the Middle East. We would love to hear from you, too. You can write to us by email:

[Viking.dietrich@elca.org](mailto:Viking.dietrich@elca.org)

or at :

Marissa and Viking Dietrich,  
Flottwellstrasse 3a,  
10785 Berlin, Germany

### SUPPORT GLOBAL MISSION!

**By check:** Make payable to "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" with "Viking and Marissa Dietrich GCS 2050" in the memo line. Give through your synod office or mail your check to: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.

**By credit or debit card:** See [ELCA.org/MissionaryGiving](http://ELCA.org/MissionaryGiving) or call 800-638-3522 and specify "Viking and Marissa Dietrich GCS2050".

**By automatic monthly bank withdrawal, or to establish a covenant of prayer, communication and support:** Contact 800-638-3522, ext. 2820, or [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).

**For contributions to the ELCA's Covid-19 Response go to:**  
[ELCA Covid-19 Response](http://ELCA Covid-19 Response)

# Recruitment Open Central Europe Teachers

[Click Here To Apply](#)

Or go to ELCA.org "Job Board."

ELCA is proceeding with recruitment aware of continued travel restrictions and the uncertainty of volunteers being able to deploy. Depending on changes, decisions about deployment will be made near the end of May.

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### Thank You for your support!

Thank you for your support the work of the ELCA's Global Mission through prayer and important financial contributions. This may be the time for congregations to renew their covenants with the ELCA Mission Advancement office. During the restructuring of the Churchwide Office, roles and responsibilities are changing and there may be some delay in response time. For more information, the correct email address is [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).

For an individuals who would like to support our work with the ELCA, we now have a "peer to peer" giving page, where you can donate directly to my fund raising page. To do that just click here: [Dietrich Fundraising Page](#)

*Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news[a] of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." - Mark 1:14-15*