

JULY 2021

NACHRICHTEN AUS BERLIN



Insights and experiences from ELCA missionaries Marissa and Viking Dietrich in Berlin where Viking serves as Regional Representative in Europe, for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Service and Justice Unit.

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3"

Dear Friends,

It has been a while since our kids were as young as they are in these photos. For some reason, when Marissa and I take our walks on the weekend, I seem to be noticing children and the discoveries they are up to. Maybe its because we have news that we will be grandparents in a few months!

In any case, as long as I have been traveling, I have always been excited to see what lies around the next bend in the road, the next corner of a city block. In a familiar biblical passage in 1 Corinthians, Paul writes, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways." But then in the very next breath, he continues, "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known." As much as I like to think I am grown up now - mature and wise, Paul reminds us that there is still so much to discover about God and God's kingdom.

About four months ago, I saw a little boy holding a rock walking toward a lake. He was concentrating so hard on that rock, feeling it with his thumb, estimating its weight, and he was smiling, with anticipation and wonder. How high would the splash be? How many rings would it make? Two months ago I saw a group of children playing in the forest, building something with fallen branches. One little girl was touching and examining different branches, then she picked up the largest one and grinned ear to ear with her success at lifting it and the potential of her contribution. Just last month, I saw a baby in their parent's arms, looking so intently at their parent's face, watching the expressions, listening, learning!

As I consider the changes taking place in society and in the church, these children have guided me. They have reminded me how much there is to discover, how to be curious, how to anticipate and wonder, how to set challenges for one's self, how to listen and learn. They have relieved me of the burden of having to know everything already and reminded me of the child-like joy of encountering the many mysteries of God's world.

Viking and Marissa

Farwell and Godspeed!

The Lord said, "I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared." - Exodus 23:20

Another year of school is ending for students and teachers, and we pray for a restful and healthful summer for all. Among our Central Europe Teacher volunteers, three teachers are returning to the United States this year.



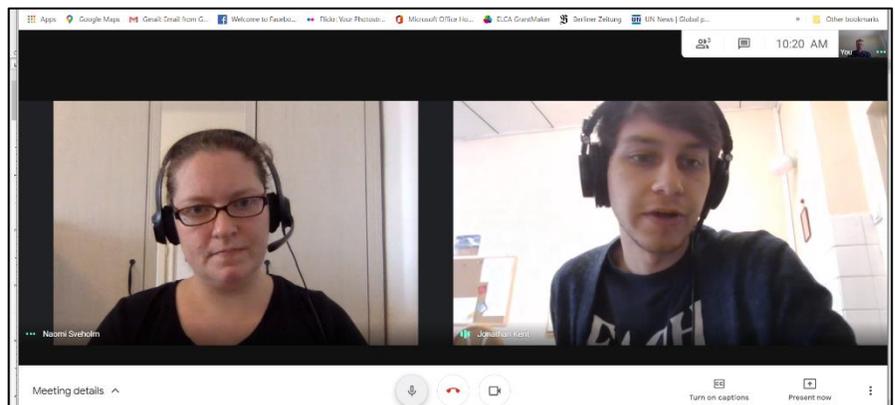
All three stayed for a second year even in the midst of challenges related to the pandemic such as online teaching and restricted movement. Edward Patricks (at left) taught Conversation classes and US History at the Lutheran School in Kosice. A retired teacher with expertise in Robotics, Edward started a Robotics team at Kosice. Edward plans to continue as an advisor from long distance even as he makes his second attempt at retirement. Rachel Bossuyt, (at right) entered the CET program as a University of Minnesota graduate with degrees in Political Science



and Global Studies. She adapted quickly to the role of teacher in Liptovsky Mikulas and even gave more time beyond her assignment for students who wanted to have conversations on different topics. Rachel is on her way to Lund, Sweden to obtain a Masters in Gender Studies. During his interview two years ago, when he was asked what motivated him to volunteer for the CET program, Jonathan "Jack" Kent (bottom right) said it was in part because of his sense of God being incarnate in people and cultures and wanting to see God working in a different place. A graduate of St Norbert College with a degree in History and Teaching Certification in Early Adolescence, Jack taught conversation classes at Liptovsky Mikulas, side by side with Rachel, and enjoyed hiking in the beautiful Tatra mountains. Jack is returning to Wisconsin with the goal of landing a teaching position. All three teachers were loved by their school staff and students. Also pictured (bottom left) is Naomi Sveholm, Education Coordinator for the CET program.

Gracious God, we thank you for the work and witness of your servants Edward, Rachel and Jack who have enriched the CET community and shared their gifts with colleagues and students where they were teaching. Bless and preserve them as transition to a new life. Guide them day by day, support them with friends who can encourage them, and aid them as they gain a clearer vision of that to which you are calling them.

You can apply
for this program
in the fall
for the school
year 2022-2023



It can be said the history of humanity is a history of migration. Think of the biblical figure Abraham, or the Exodus story. Think of the history of languages, for example, the migration of Germanic tribes through Europe. Today, there are 80 million people who are not at home because something has displaced them: War and insecurity primarily, but also poverty and failed states, famine and climate change.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, as well as its predecessor bodies, has been heavily invested in work with migrants and refugees ever since the end of WWII, when millions of German descent folk left or were forced to leave their homes in Eastern Europe and Russia and arrived in Germany where there was no housing.



This picture, circa 1949, shows refugees in Cuxhaven, Germany, boarding a ship bound Canada.

Today the ELCA works with companion churches and organizations to continue its commitment to coming to the aid of people on the move. On its website, [Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service](#) writes, “For over 80 years, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has been a champion for refugees and migrants from around the globe. Our legacy of compassionate service has made a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people who have found safety and hope in America’s communities. Our history reflects American Lutherans’ deep immigrant roots and passionate commitment to welcoming newcomers, especially those who are most in

need. Through the Long Welcome, we help ensure that refugees and migrants are protected, embraced and empowered in a world of just and welcoming communities.”

LIRS has helped welcome over 500,000 people!



In Europe, through its Service and Justice Home Area, the ELCA supports people on the move through partners in several locations. The Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy operates a Medical Advice Center where refugees and undocumented people in Moscow can be counseled on both medical and legal questions. In Germany, the ELCA is supporting an effort of the Evangelical Church in Germany, called [United4Rescue](#), to support rescue missions in the Mediterranean Sea performed by [Sea Watch](#), an organization using both planes and ships to find and rescue people attempting to cross the Mediterranean.



Photo credit - Evangelical Lutheran Church Hamburg

The ELCA is working with three organizations in Serbia and Bosnia to respond to the needs of refugees most of whom are fleeing the wars in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. [The Asylum Protection Center](#) in Belgrade, offers legal, psycho-social and pedagogical support to asylum seekers challenged with integration. The Church World Service, also based in Belgrade, began work in late 2019 with refugees in Bosnia. See the new [CWS Report](#) released on World Refugee Day, June 20. The ELCA is also supporting a project of the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization called [Empowerment of Refugee Women and Children](#)

STAY CONNECTED...

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. If you would like a copy by email, let me know at::

Viking.dietrich@elca.org

We would love to hear from you, too. You can write to us either at the email above or by sending post to :

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SUPPORT SERVICE AND JUSTICE!

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](https://www.elca.org/MissionaryGiving) or call 800-638-3522 and specify "Viking and Marissa Dietrich GCS2050". Or go directly to our "peer to peer" giving page at [Dietrich Fundraising Page](#)

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.

To support work with migrants and refugees go to [ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response](#).

Zoom me in!

Recently, I met via Zoom with the youth of Middlecreek Conference and later with youth from Zion in Herndon, both Upper Susquehanna Synod.

Marissa and I were scheduled for home assignment in summer 2021, but due to the pandemic, the ELCA has postponed all home assignments until 2022.

But this doesn't mean we can't meet. Just **Zoom me in!**

We all have learned so much about online meetings, and it is now easier than ever to visit you. Invite me to worship with you. Invite me to any online gathering you might have as a congregation. The only restriction is the time difference (6 hours from ET).

Thank You for your support!

Thank you for your support the work of the ELCA's Service and Justice Unit (*formerly Global Mission*) through prayer and important financial contributions. In the first quarter donor report, we received contributions from **Friedens Lutheran**, **Faith in Somerset**, **Centerville** in Newville, and **Trinity** in Camp Hill. We also have continued covenant support from **First Lutheran** in Colorado Springs, **Grace** in State College, **Holy Trinity** in Lanse, **Palm** in Palmyra, **St Matthew** in York, and both **Trinity** and **Trindle Springs** in Mechancisburg. Thank you!

For more information about covenants and contributions, you can also send questions or inquiries to globalchurch@elca.org.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." Matthew 19:14