



ELCM Cathedral Choir visit's USA Northwest Synod of Wisconsin - ELCA

Cathedral Choir of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi spent three weeks in Northwest Synod of Wisconsin of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America from 19th April to 11th May 2006. The group performed fifteen concerts in six Conferences of the synod which can be termed as deaneries in ELCM. The singing of African Traditional choir brought change to many people who patronized the concerts. A group of twenty five people performed in a number of churches and auditoriums.

Apart from singing the choir members visited different places including two radio stations, dairy board company, high schools, elementary schools, dairy farms and learnt different cultures of people in Wisconsin. The theme of the visit was “**We Are Walking in the Light of God**”; Cathedral Choir sang and danced with their companions in the song called *Tili Nkuyenda Kuwala Kwa Ambuye*. In respect of the theme and the companionship the Synod designed a Ti-Shirts showing people beating drums and the map of the world indicating where Malawi is found in Africa.

Every song was translated into English so that the audience was able to follow and understand the singing. In order to keep the information NWSW put the translated songs and can be downloaded at www.nwsynod-wisconsin.org.

By: Mphatso Thole
Information Officer

ELCM Companion Coordinator Teaches at Lay School of Ministry in Northwest Synod of Wisconsin -ELCA

For the first time Mphatso Thole who is the Companion Coordinator of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi taught at Lay School of Ministry in Northwest Synod of Wisconsin of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The two days from 12th to 13th May 2006 took place at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Chippewa Falls.

Thole presented several subjects including poverty in Malawi, Hunger, Politics, the growth of Lutheran in Malawi, Profile of Malawi and its geographical position. Through the presentations students of the School learnt so much about ELCM and Malawi as a country in general.



ELCM Holds its First Choir Directors Workshop

For its first time Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi held Choir Directors/Leaders workshop from 2nd to 9th July 2006. Every Deanery of ELCM sent five representatives to Madisi Lay Training School in Dowa where Choir Directors were equipped in how to compose good songs.

Recognizing that composing of songs and making music is a difficult task, song composers have to be reminded of the words and the meaning of the songs and know how to make touching music in line with the Bible and Lutheran Doctrine. The workshop was privileged to have guest speaker, Greg Kaufmann, Assistant to the Bishop/ Director of Synod Resource Center and Teacher of Lay School of Ministry of Northwest Synod of Wisconsin – ELCA taught about Bible reflection, gender balance and how Choir Directors can compose songs from the Bible. Other speakers were Rev Feston M Phiri – ELCM Training Coordinator, Mrs Stella Nyasulu, HIV/AIDS Coordinator and Greta Anderson, Companion from Grace Lutheran Church of Northwest Synod of Wisconsin.

Companion Coordinator of NSW –ELCA Speaks at Pastors Retreat

Diane Kaufmann, the Companion Coordinator of Northwest Synod of Wisconsin on 20th July 2006 spoke at Pastors Retreat of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi at Luther Hall in Lilongwe.

Diane spoke about the companionship that exists between ELCM and NSW. She passed greetings from companions of NSW –ELCA and shared the experiences of having good companionship between ELCM and NSW. She said that prayer being the first of the companionship, should be done frequently. Companions from both sides have to pray for one another. Letter writing and sharing experiences in how the church is growing and problems faced by sister parishes/congregations.

Workshop on Prayer

Prayer Watch International is a Church Organization that conducts prayer workshops in the world. This organization is based in United States of America. Rev Bjorn Pedersen the Lutheran Pastor of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is the President.

PWI started conducting prayer worship workshops some years ago in East African countries with Tanzania and Kenya. In 2005 the Organization started its first workshops with Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi. It was from 23rd July to 29th August 2006 when PWI drew all ELCM pastors to the workshop that took place at Lilongwe Church Centre. The workshop was officially opened by Bishop Dr Joseph P Bvumbwe who said that Prayer is a tool to fight the devil. Without prayer the Church is nothing. He urged the pastors to be exemplary in prayer. He gave an example of Dr Martin Luther, the great reformer that he was always in prayer. Because of this, Lutheran Church is a praying Church worldwide hence we as Lutheran ought to be people of prayer. Through the workshop the Bishop believed that pastors would be intensified and able to transform different people into God's salvation. As Martin Luther said prayer is an important tool hence targeting pastors was very important that many people will be reached.

The prayer workshops are aimed at encouraging all believers to be constant in prayers and know different ways of praying. Similar workshop will be taking place every year in Malawi. ELCM through Translation

Project is translating the book titled “FACE TO FACE WITH GOD IN YOUR CHURCH”. The book is being translated in two languages of Chichewa and Tumbuka. By the middle of November the copies of these two local languages will be on circulation in Malawi. The book was written by Pastor Pedersen and tells more about praying.

Rev. Feston M Phiri was appointed Prayer Ministry Coordinator in Malawi and very soon the Church will appoint Prayer Coordinators in all six deaneries of the Church.

As the organization is trying to reach everywhere throughout the world, very soon in future the similar workshops will be conducted in Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana.

The participants were presented with Certificates of completion of phase 1. Next year phase 2 will begin.

Reported By:

Mphatso Thole –ELCM Information Officer.

Bishop Dr Joseph Bvumbwe Celebrates His Birth Day at Lutheran Cottage in Monkey Bay

The leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi, Bishop Dr Joseph P Bvumbwe celebrated his birth day party at Lutheran Cottage in Monkey Bay, Mangochi. It was a belated party that took place on 20th August 2006.

The ELCM leader was born on 15th August several years ago. Since he was born, this was the first time the Church staff celebrates the Bishop’s birthday. Realizing many things the Bishop has done to the Church, people of Malawi and entire world, members of ELCM Head Office staff who represented the many people in the country at the function found out the need for getting together and enjoy with the Bishop the day he was born.

The celebration which was lead by Mrs Mabel Madinga the Administrative Secretary of the Church was the beginning for future plans in how to celebrate the day. It was just a surprise when the Bishop was invited in the evening of the day. Several speakers at the function said that it is important to celebrate the birthday of the Bishop every year. Some people have been reading the biography of the leader of ELCM. It was only a few who realized the importance of remembering this day, Rev Feston Phiri, the Training Coordinator said. We have to come together and inform many people about the day. As it was a surprise to the Bishop, in his speech, the leader said that he was happy that the staff found out how important this day is. It was a pleasure to celebrate the day and thanked the staff for the precious gift he received from them.

The staff agreed to have this day remembered and put it into consideration so that every year we have to come together and pray that God has to keep the Bishop dreaming and visualizing the future of the Church in the country.

Bishop Bvumbwe is a very busy person and it is sometimes difficult to have time and share ideas with different members of staff, especially the juniors. It is only this day that the staff and other people can share a talk with the Bishop. It is the view of the office that through organizing this event every year, members of staff will be sharing stories with their leader.

Reported by: Mphatso Thole



Celebrating the introduction of deaneries

The growing of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi is so fast. After twenty three years, last year ELCM introduced deaneries in the country. There are six deaneries and these are Karonga, Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Lake Shore, Blantyre and Phalombe.

All members of the Church have accepted to have the deaneries under the leadership of the Deans. Bishop Dr Joseph Bvumbwe this year visited all the deanery centres encouraging members and celebrating together the existence of the deaneries.

On 20th August 2006 Bishop Bvumbwe visited Lake Shore Deanery and preached at Balaka Parish, the Deanery Centre. All Pastors of the Deanery attended the function which was closed with the partaking of the Holy Communion.

Feeding Assistants Training for the Season 2006 to 2007

It is now four years since Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi started feeding orphans in its Parishes. Due to different problems the country is facing many people are still becoming poor and poorer. People are dying from different diseases like HIV/Aids, Malaria, Meningitis, Tuberculosis and many more. Hence children of under- five years of age are the most marginalized group after the death of their parents.

It is in this sense that due to the increasing number of feeding centres in parishes of ELCM, the Church started organizing trainings of feeding Assistants of all Centres before the feeding season starts. According to the last statistics there were 127 feeding centres in the country and it is expected to have more than this figure next season.

On 15th August 2006, Bishop Dr Joseph P Bvumbwe officially opened the second part of training. About sixty feeding assistants participated the training. In his opening remarks, Bishop Bvumbwe said that as Christians, Lutherans are supposed to care for the needy. Referring from Acts of Apostles, Jesus' disciples taught of caring one another. The Church cares the orphans because of not winning favour but do what Jesus said about loving one another. God created people not to suffer. God does not allow His people to face troubles. Because of evil doing and not loving one another the world is facing several challenges. The poor don't love one another. Rich people, the nations, politicians, the poor and many people in the entire world are killing, hating, and criticizing each other because of lack of love.

Government of Malawi is failing to take care of the needy, because of poor governance, corruption and public misuse of funds, ELCM is trying her best to be the father and mother of the needy especially orphans. Women of Prayer of the Church started the program and it was them who were taking part in the first stage of feeding kids. But now men are active in making sure that orphans are cared at feeding Centres. This year's training has good representation of both men and women.

The Bishop said that through prayers from our partners, ELCM has been blessed with abundant support for orphans through feeding and medication. Supply of bed nets, paying of schools fees to orphans through bursary fund program, assisting the needy including the aged during hunger period. These are some of the blessings that God is giving to people through the Church.

In his closing remarks, of the first training Bishop Dr Bvumbwe on 11th August asked feeding assistants to commit themselves as they are serving the Lord. He dreams that all kids who receive the nutritious food grow health and be good future leaders. As they receive nutritious and medication at the same time the Church is showing love to kids and in so doing fulfill the work that Jesus Christ commissioned us to do.

The following subjects were covered: Bible Study, Overview of Nutrition and malnutrition, Family Planning, Sustainable development in feeding centres, How to cook porridge and balanced diet, Interpersonal relationship, Teaching and learning at feeding centres, Who is an orphan and care, Gender and development, Hygiene and good health, How to write a chart, Who and why we feed and needs of feeding centres, Identification of a sick child. Prevention of Contagious diseases and Systematic medication, ARVs Management, Admission/discharge criteria, VCT and Positive living, Palliative care and Food security among others.

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Women's Seminar in Social Injustice

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi has embarked a campaign of eradicating evils of harassment through seminars that will be conducted in all six Deaneries of the church. The first workshop took place from 21st to 24th August 2006 in Monkey Bay Parish of Lake Shore Deanery.

The seminar was officially opened and closed by Bishop Dr Joseph P Bvumbwe. In his closing remarks Bishop said that the Church will make sure to teach about gender and protection of women rights. Many families are on separation because of violence caused by their husbands. God made man and woman to enjoy in the family life. Participants were asked to teach other people that fighting in the families should be stopped. In this case the Church leader said that the participants should be exemplary to other people. The aim of the seminar was not to teach women that they should show bad habits to their husbands but respect and teach them not to practice this evil practice of violence.

Women who participated this workshop were pastors' wives from the deanery, parish workers, parish chairladies and other women leaders. The topics focused on Bible reflection in line with spirituality, domestic violence, human rights and gender based violence and protection against sexual abuse.

Survival and Counseling Skills Workshop

Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa is conducting Survival and Counseling Skills Workshop in countries where there are its member churches. According to Mrs Tebogo D Dames, the facilitator from LUCSA office in South Africa the workshop has been taken place in several countries including Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia and now in Malawi.

The workshop in Malawi was from 28th August to 1st September 2006. Bishop Dr Joseph P Bvumbwe of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi who is also the Treasurer of LUCSA officially opened the meeting on 28th August. The Bishop said that it is not easy for an HIV/Aids positive living person to disclose his or her status. He thanked the participants for coming UP at the open and tell people about their problems. Many people are living without going for test because of stigma. Churches for the past



Tigawane – ELCM Sharing News

years have been accused of not taking part in fighting against HIV/Aids. ELCM as a member of Malawi Council of Churches is taking part in breaking the silence. On 1st December 1997, Bishop Bvumbwe preached for the first time at World Aids Day at Civil Stadium in Lilongwe. He preached about stigma and breaking the silence. Since that time ELCM has been taking part in preaching about fighting the pandemic. Every one has been affected or infected with the disease in one way or another. The Bishop said when you know that you are sick from a certain disease that is when you have hope of being healed.

Through the Bishop's one of the chapters of the thesis book titled "CAN THE PULPIT BE USED? The Bishop was answering that the Church can say about HIV/AIDS. Hence the workshops concerning the fight against the pandemic are very important.

The church leader said that through support groups, people will be encouraged and easy to support as they come together and share ideas of good counseling survival. HIV/Aids is a cross cutting issue and it is good to work together. All ELCM Departments take part in fighting the killer disease.

About twenty six people participated in the workshop. Participants were from Chilimbikitso Support Group in Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota, Madisi, Phalombe, Kaporu in Karonga, Dedza, Lilongwe Cathedral Support Group of Lilongwe and a representative from Malawi Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS.

Bishop Bvumbwe thanked LUCSA Office for supporting the project which is the first of its kind in ELCM.

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