

**Mission Service Opportunities**  
**Position Description**

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**COMPANION SYNOD MISSIONARY IN RESIDENCE**  
**Sierra Leone**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone**

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*August 25, 2011*

**WORK OBJECTIVE/ASSIGNMENTS**

The Companion Synod Pastor in Residence is a two year call for a rostered leader in the ELCA to serve with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone (ELCSL). The primary function is to build relations between the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod (NT-NL), ELCA Global Mission (GM), and the ELCSL while serving as a resource to enhance the ministry and mission of the ELCSL, especially as it related to the strategic priorities of the church.

**Primary Responsibilities**

**Companion Synod liaison for the NT-NL Synod**

1. Communication, sending updates, telling the story
  - Journalism: keep up a weekly blog, provide a monthly article for congregational newsletters and maintain correspondence with people showing interest in Sierra Leone
  - Empowering ELCSL members to tell their own story: work with members of the ELCSL in developing their communication skills with the companion synods; include contributions from ELCSL members in blog and newsletter articles
  
2. Cultural interpretation
  - Helping synod members understand life in Sierra Leone
  - Provide orientation and perspective for groups coming to Sierra Leone, including:
    - + Visiting Synod delegations
    - + Synod Assembly presentation
  - Helping ELCSL church members understand the Synod's engagement in SL (ministry of presence)

**Continuing education consultant**

1. Work with commission for evangelism and outreach to:
  - Identify/discuss needs for education
  - Develop a plan of action to meet needs (long and short term) while exploring the use of regional resources
  - Develop recommendations for paths to ordination/certification
  
2. Work with commission for evangelism and outreach to plan and lead seminars or congregational workshops

## **Development/Diakonal services consultant**

1. Attend Commission meetings
2. Work with Development Desk Officer in to assist in:
  - Project planning and identifying donor support
  - Accompany implementation and review
  - Reviewing grant proposals and reports including providing guidance on PME (planning, monitoring, evaluation)
  - Monitoring and reporting on congregational IGAs (income generating activities)
  - Facilitating seminar on business principles, management, etc

## **Other responsibilities**

### **General accompaniment**

1. Consultancy with youth (ministry of presence)
2. Presence with other commissions :
  - finance/admin
  - education and leadership
3. Regular visits to congregations
  - Assisting with sacraments and giving pastoral

## **Accountability**

Local Supervisor: Bishop of the ELCSL

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

ELCA Rostered person; member of the NT-NL Synod preferred. Previous experience in Sierra Leone, West Africa or outside the US, and an understanding of the NT-NL Synod would be preferred; the ability to clearly communicate is required.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

LOA (letter of agreement)

- Salary and benefits provided by ELCA-GM (see sample budget)
- Local logistics (housing, utilities, transportation) provided by ELCSL in collaboration with NT-NL Synod

## **LOGISTICAL INFORMATION**

**Town** Freetown

**Housing** Mission house available on the campus of the ELCSL headquarters - costs to be covered by the NT-NL Synod

**Language** English widely used; study of Creole increases effectiveness of mission personnel

## **SITE INFORMATION**

The West African nation of Sierra Leone is rich in history and culture, natural beauty and determined human spirit. From a past shaped significantly by the African slave trade to a brutal civil war (1991 – 2001), the people of Sierra Leone have known their share of pain and suffering. Today the country is at peace but continues to struggle with the wounds of war, pervasive poverty, high unemployment, devastated infrastructure, and one of the highest maternal mortality

rates in the world. In recent years, the country has made considerable progress in establishing a stable and democratic political environment. The nation is blessed with resources for continued development, including iron ore and other minerals, diamonds, off shore oil, and fertile land. Religious tolerance is a primary value held by both the minority Christians and majority Muslims. In 2011, Sierra Leone marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nation's independence from Britain, and preparations are underway for presidential elections in 2012.

Since the end of the war in 2001, the capital of Freetown has grown tremendously and is now a congested, chaotic city. Sierra Leone is about the size of South Carolina and in the provinces beyond the capital region, life is dominated by subsistence farming. Rice, cassava and palm oil are among the staple crops.

Like the nation itself, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone is multi-cultural and multi-lingual. The ELCSL was formed, beginning in 1989, by a Sierra Leonean who had become Lutheran while living in the U.S. He called together family, friends, and associates, and the church was thus born of relational evangelism.

Today the ELCSL numbers 23 congregations in urban as well as remote village locations. Total membership is estimated to be 3,000, with the majority being children and youth. Members are from a variety of tribal, educational, and economic backgrounds. Throughout ELCSL history, the Lutheran Book of Worship has been the primary worship resource, supplemented by hymnody from the Methodist tradition. Pentecostal influences are also evident in Lutheran worship practices in the urban settings. The LBW liturgy was translated into the Mende language in the mid 1990's and Mende is used for worship in many provincial settings. A Krio language translation of the English liturgy was recently completed as well.

In early 2011 the ELCSL began a process of evaluation and strategic planning. Priorities for the church are beginning to emerge and include a focus on leadership development, including continuing education for current pastors and evangelists, as well as training a new generation of pastors. A second priority is the completion of local church structures in those settings where congregations are meeting in classrooms. Creation of a Lutheran Development Services as a local NGO under the ELCSL umbrella is also under discussion.

The incumbent bishop, Rev. Tom Barnett was re-elected to a second term of office as bishop in 2009. His term of service will end in 2015, and he is not eligible to run again. He is the only bishop in the history of the church, and served as president prior to 2003 when the ELCSL constitution was changed to create the bishop's office. Members of the ELCSL, particularly the active pastors, are acutely aware that the election of a new bishop will mark a significant new era in the life of the church. Discussions about a new bishop are already underway, and the election issue will be an important dynamic in the coming few years.

### **General Qualifications for ELCA Mission Personnel**

- Christian faith and a commitment to the mission of the church
- Openness to various expressions of Christian faith and respect for people of other faiths
- Respect for beliefs, values and customs of church and culture where assigned

- Well-developed inter-personal skills demonstrating understanding and compassion
- Demonstrated ability to carry out the responsibilities and the ability to adapt to different standards and practices
- Ability to work within the framework of a local administration
- Adaptable and flexible – sense of humor – good physical and emotional health
- Live and serve in a way which reflects the vision and expectations of the ELCA



[www.elca.org/globalmission](http://www.elca.org/globalmission)