



NEWS FROM YAGM SENEGAL

Pastor Kristin Engstrom, YAGM Country Coordinator

October, 2019

A New Mission for the 2018–2019 YAGM

“I’m going to have to refigure out my life.” “I’m ready to stop sweating all the time.” “I don’t know how my friends and family will receive the new me.” “I can’t wait to eat tacos.” “I need to figure out how to engage people at church in deeper conversations and learnings about justice issues.”

These are just a few snippets of the many conversations that took place during the final retreat for the 2018-2019 Senegal YAGM. As you heard from the diversity of their statements, they were simultaneously ready to take the next step in their life as faithful leaders while also uncertain of what that next step be or who would take that step of faith with them.

But, just as they had courageously made their way in Senegal by faith, they once again realized that they needed to trust God, trust themselves, and trust others and they would find a way forward in faith.

For me, this is the beauty of Young Adults in Global Mission. The transformation and opening up of young adults during a year of learning, service, tenacity, interdependence, and discomfort. Each year, the young adults we send back to the US and to the ELCA have been changed by their year in Senegal and other YAGM countries. And each year, they return to the US seeking to share their transformation with others. Yet, they also worry if their families, friends, and yes, also their faith communities will receive them and their new priorities and mission for life, for faith, and for global justice.

And so, each year, I also take a risk of faith, that as I send these dear YAGM back to the US, I also trust that you, my dear sisters and brothers in faith, in the ELCA, will receive these young adults with open hearts. That you will accompany them, listen to them, dare with them, and yes, join them in their new mission (even if they are still figuring out what that mission is).

Accompanying YAGM Senegal

My work as an ELCA Global Missionary is possible thanks to the generosity of many congregations and individuals in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Thank you! Jerejef! Merci! Jokonjol! Jahram! You can contact me via e-mail at kristin.engstrom@elca.org. You are also invited to support me as an ELCA Global Missionary here.

If you would like to see more pictures and stories of daily life from YAGM Senegal, please check out our blog at <http://yagmsenegal.wixsite.com/blog>. *On est ensemble! (We are in this together.)*



The 2018-2019 Senegal YAGM during our final retreat in July.



Pastor Kristin Engstrom

As an ELCA missionary, I serve as the Country Coordinator for the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program in Senegal.

I'm originally from the mid-western United States, and served as a parish pastor in northern New Jersey for six years prior to moving to Senegal in 2016.

Inside Senegal

Gamou: each year, every town and village in Senegal hosts a “gamou.” A gamoul is a religious (Muslim) gathering of families and friends for celebration, prayer, and sharing meals. Officially, it celebrates the birth of the prophet Mohammed, on a date chosen by the town or village. It also becomes a sort of pilgrimage to one's home town.



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Meet the 2019-2020 Senegal YAGM

On August 23rd, the fourth group of Senegal YAGM arrive! After three weeks of orientation in Dakar, they travelled to their host communities, where they have been finding their way through new work responsibilities, constant language blunders, and becoming part of their host families.

The YAGM in Yeumbeul and Linguère serve with Senegalese Lutheran Development Services (SLDS). The YAGM in Fatick and Foundgioune serve with the Lutheran Church of Senegal (ELS).

Please keep the YAGM, their supervisors, their host families, their communities, and myself in your prayers as they adjust to life in Senegal.

Kaitlyn, from Florida, is serving in Yeumbeul with the SLDS Preschool & Elementary School, the Education & Library Program, and the Sports & Leisure Program.

Connor, from Colorado, is serving in Yeumbeul with the SLDS Credit Union & Microfinance Program and with the SLDS Finance Office.

Sarah, from Texas, is serving in Fatick with the ELS Christian Resources (worship & music) Office and the ELS Finance & Accounting Department.

Charlie, from California, is serving in Foundiougne with the ELS Department of Community Development.

Collins, from North Carolina, is serving in Linguere with the SLDS Dairy Farm & Creamery and teaching English at the Linguere Roman Catholic Elementary School.

Young adults of the ELS Dakar parish with the 2019-2020 YAGM of Senegal.



A visit to the Omarienne Mosque of Dakar. From left: Mbacke, Pastor Diouf, Collins, Imam Tall, Pastor Kristin, Connor, Sarah, Kaitlyn, and Charlie.