

I-K Lutheran

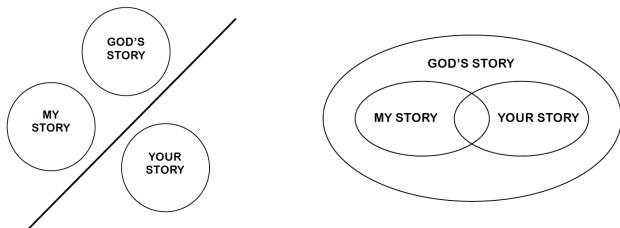
Where God is doing new things

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!”

(Angels to shepherds at the birth of Jesus as told in Luke 2:14)

In early November, my wife Janet, Assistant to the Bishop Pastor Heather Apel, and I heard the angels' proclamation of peace for all people when we met in Guatemala with Bishop Izani Bruch and Marcelo Molla of the Iglesia Evangelica Luterana en Chile (aka IELCH, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile). We were gathered there for a triennial consultation with nearly 100 other ELCA synod leaders and the leaders of their companion churches from Latin America and the Caribbean.

While together, we crossed back and forth across boundaries established by culture, language, gender, race, and history to share stories of God's presence and the work of God's Spirit in each of our very different contexts and lives as individuals and as communities. We engaged these conversations under a model of accompaniment rooted in trust that in Christ God has reconciled all of us to God and each of us to one another. This, rather than an older model of global relationships that suggested that we have God and need to bring God to others. The two different models of relationship across culture and context look something like this:



The diagram on the right looks much more like the angels' ancient message, doesn't it? On earth, peace among those whom God favors, all wrapped in the glory and wonder of God's goodness and grace and connected by that grace to one another.

In the Christ of Christmas God reconciles all to God and to one another. In the Babe of Bethlehem God crosses the boundaries that divide to swaddle all nations, people and creation in self-giving, life-giving love.

That's why we agreed with our siblings of the IELCH to establish an annual day of prayer for one another on the First Sunday of Advent, beginning with this year. Because this was a late-breaking commitment to one another, more information, like sample prayers and some information about the IELCH, will be forthcoming by the week of November 18th.

In the meantime, those two diagrams and our companionship with the IELCH suggest a couple of Advent/Christmas questions to ponder as individuals and as communities of faith:

What divisive boundaries do you see between the people around you, in your family, your congregation, your community, your world?

How might you and your faith community celebrate the Christ of Christmas by crossing those boundaries to live together into the life-giving, reconciling peace that radiates from the manger-borne babe?

May profound peace and radiant joy surround and sustain you this holy season!

Bishop Bill Gafkjen

December 2019





Pictured above (left to right) are Marcelo Molla (IELCH), Jan Rosdail (W. Iowa Synod), Bishop Izani Bruch (IELCH), Bishop Bill Gafkjen, Janet Gafkjen, Pr. Heather Apel.



Pastor Dan Fugate and four youth from the Indiana-Kentucky Synod attended the ELCA National Youth Leadership Summit at Lutheridge in Arden, North Carolina, October 31 - November 3, 2019. Pictured above (left to right) are Rachel Schade (St. Thomas, Richmond, KY), Jonathan Baber (Trinity, Terre Haute, IN), Hannah Limbong (Christ, Jeffersontown, KY), and Abigail Offhaus (St. John, Fort Wayne, IN). Students learned peer ministry skills that they can use in our synod, in their congregations, at school, and anywhere they encounter those who are in need.



Indiana-Kentucky Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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