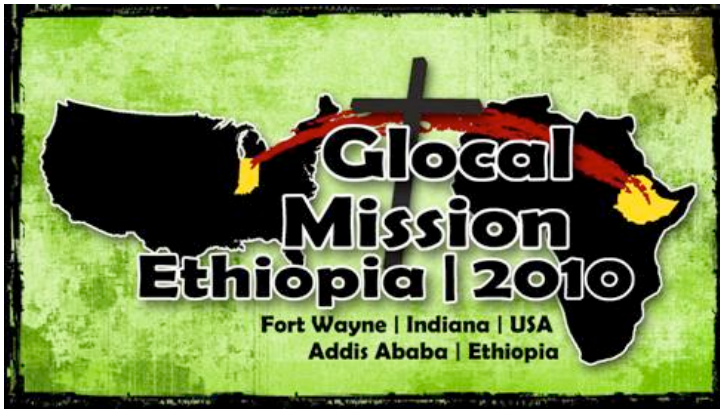


Why I'm Going...



Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

All Christians are missionaries. Sharing the good news is a natural response to the gift of salvation. Read why these missionaries are stepping forward to be used by God through Glocal Missions.



Melanie Beck, Missionary

Concordia Lutheran School, 2nd Grade Teacher

A famous Ethiopian proverb says, “Eat when the food is ready, speak when the time is right.” For me, the time is right and the delicious aroma of a hot meal is wafting in my direction. In conjunction, John 4:35 says, “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” I have been called to venture out of my comfort zone and gather that harvest in the African country of Ethiopia.

This October a group from Concordia Church will be led to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to serve the Lord in a ‘glocal’ partnership. Some team

members will focus on Muslim ministry; others on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. My focus will be on fostering and strengthening the relationships between the Mekane Yesus Lutheran School and Concordia Elementary School. Concordia students have a basic knowledge of the Mekane Yesus school, but our glocal team has more ambitious ideas that would benefit both educational entities and allow them to form more interactive relationships.

As an educator, I attempt to open my students' eyes to the world around them. I tell them to do this, however, with Jesus-colored glasses. I want my students to comprehend that, as a Christian, each of us has a God-given mission to tell others about Christ and form relationships with other Christians.

My aspirations for our mission trip to Ethiopia are multifaceted. Ultimately, I aim to be an ambassador for Concordia Elementary School. I want to be the glue that holds two Lutheran schools together, spanning thousands of miles, cultural differences, and a plethora of other diversities. As a result, it is my prayer that the students of both schools will cultivate a greater interest, knowledge, and sense of community with their Lutheran brothers and sisters around the world.



Barb Johnson, Missionary

Concordia Lutheran School Music Teacher

This past year I have grown in my love for Christ and the many blessings He has given me. A year ago I found out I had breast cancer once again. Fortunately, it was caught very early. With the help of many friends and family, I coped with six months of chemotherapy. It wasn't always the easiest. However, placing the emphasis of my life on helping others with their relationship to Christ, it helped my relationship to Him and others.

I have an opportunity to continue to build the relationship we started two years ago in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Two years ago a team of people started a relationship with the school with the help of our interpreters. This relationship has continued through the help of these special people. We will get to share what the "schooling" is about in America. Also we are going to be able to share some music with the students. What a joy!

My started a relationship in Ethiopia with Kibret and Mesfin, two of our interpreters, when I visited two years ago. It will be great to see them again and pick up our stories from where we left two years ago. They have been helpful in planning and working with team as we make our plan to "teach" the children at Mekane Yesus. Seeing the smiles and joy they have when they see us will be worth all the work we put into our planning.

Rick Warren stated in a devotion he wrote that helping others helps his wife cope with the cancer she has. She cannot get well. However, by helping others, she helps herself cope as well as increasing her relationship with the Lord. This same idea was what I did as I coped with my chemo treatments. I want to share my "help" with the children of Ethiopia. The Lord is offering me a golden opportunity.



Joe Milledge, Missionary

Business Man

Since my mission trip to Ethiopia in the fall of 2006, I feel the Lord is leading me to return to Ethiopia. I have been inspired to reach out to our local Muslim community. I have developed friendship with Said, Isnino & their children and several other families and I want them to have the eternal riches of forgiveness and salvation that comes from a living relationship with Jesus.

I am hoping to learn more about friendship ministry to Muslims in Ethiopia so we can bless the same ministry in Fort Wayne. I pray that God will use me in a way that can encourage others & equip me to witness to others in sharing in the joy of the gospel.

Let me be a missionary wherever I go!



Gary Penner, Missionary

Corporate Communicator

God's Word and His Spirit have led me to believe in Jesus the Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. Simply put, Jesus has taken the full blame and punishment for my sin, and I have taken the full pardon. I have received God's grace. Believing this, and the resulting personal relationship of accountability to Jesus, assures me of eternal life with God. It is already mine, and He promises the same for others.

I believe that by taking risks to get outside of my own comfort zone, I can more easily talk to others about my faith. Mission work gives me a context in which I can more easily talk about my relationship with Jesus and how it has changed my life. I can talk more easily about the gift of grace. I believe there is no higher calling, and although I have considered it again and again throughout my life, I know I don't have to be a pastor to do this. Jesus calls all of us to be missionaries everywhere we go.

"What joy this sweet sentence gives: I know that my Redeemer lives!"



Connor Sassmannshausen, Missionary

Youth With a Mission

I didn't really know how to answer this, but as I thought about it, I realized what the answer was. *I* didn't have a reason to be going. I'm just a dandelion blowing in the Wind. Dandelions don't tell their seed where to fall. They don't decide where to grow. They grow where they are placed, and they let the wind take their fluffy, white seeds wherever it may. I don't know why I'm going, but I do know that there will be a reason for going.

Who are we to try to understand what God wants us to do. On the first trip, I wanted to go with my mom, but she wouldn't let me, and again the same thing happened before the second trip. After I went to Mexico with the high school youth group, I kept coming back to the idea of missions and Discipleship Training School (DTS). I never gave it much thought, but it was a nagging feeling that kept coming back. Once the high school youth group went to Idaho and Nevada, I decided what I would do, be a dandelion.

So, at the beginning of this past summer, I sent in my application to the Denver YWAM (Youth With a Mission) base for their DTS Around the World in 80 Days. I had to have three different reference forms sent in. Four envelopes, sent from four different people on different days, all arrived at the base on the same day. I knew I was on the right path.

Shortly after that, I heard about the Ethiopia trip. Needless to say, I hardly asked this time. It was a sort of mutual understanding that I'd be going to Ethiopia this trip, because God had opened so many doors for me.

When I first told my parents I wanted to do missions, I was scared to death. After I'd told them, they told me that they had known that I would be in missions in my life. Looking back, my grades had been slipping before I told them, and once I told them, I was right back to my old self.

Having not to worry about college applications senior year was a huge load off. All the other seniors were stressed over acceptance letters, and scholarships. I just let things be. I let go of the tight hold I had on what I thought my life would be. I didn't know what my life would be, where it would be, or how it would be, but I didn't care all that much. I knew God would take me where He wanted me.

Would a dandelion tell the wind where to blow? Would a seed complain about where it was placed? Would it say it won't grow if planted in good soil?

Matthew 6:25-30, 33-34

Loretta Sassmannshausen, Missionary

Medical Office Manager



Why am I going? This is my third trip to Ethiopia and I guess my answer is similar to what it has been in the past 2 trips: God wants me there.

I have fallen in love with the Ethiopian people and cannot imagine NOT going back. They are the most beautiful people I have ever seen or met. Physically, they have a beautiful skin color and bone structure.

But more importantly, they have an amazing spirit.

They have very little, but they are SO happy with what little they have. Time (which really makes Pastor Kevin crazy) and money are of little importance to them—relationships are what are important to them.

We in America are so busy trying to make money and buy more stuff

and cram more into a day than is possible that we sacrifice and take for granted our relationships with our spouses, kids, families and friends...and even God. I am guilty as charged. I am very fortunate to have a job that I absolutely love (most of the time), so I enjoy doing it. But, I am so busy doing tasks that the important relationships in my life fall by the wayside. One of the reasons I want to go back is that it helps remind me of what is most important in my life.

This trip will be a bit different for me, I think. The first two trips, I really only had myself to take care of. I was able to process what I saw and felt on my own. This time, my 18-year-old daughter, Connor, is going. She has wanted to go the last 2 times, but the timing wasn't right. This time, the timing is perfect. I am so looking forward to sharing this experience with her and seeing things through her eyes. She is an amazing young lady who has a heart for mission. She will be going literally around the world on a 5-month mission trip beginning in April. I am so excited for her but very nervous about "my baby" leaving home for the first time and to be going to God knows where (at this point, it really is only God that knows which 8 countries she will spend time in). I am hoping that this will be a nice "baby step" for me in letting her spread her wings to fly without crashing and burning (me, not her—I have no doubt that she will fly; it's me that I am worried about).



Carla Schaller, Missionary

Nurse

Just about everything about this trip for me is stepping way out of my comfort zone. If someone asked me about my faith I would share, but never did I bring it up with a goal in mind of sharing the gospel with them not because I did not want to but because

I am uncomfortable doing so.

So, whether this is my version of a midlife crisis (which was someone's suggestion for why I felt the need to go), or the Lord showing me what he wants from me, I have run out of excuses not to go. I'm going with this being the Lord's plan because all of the opposition has been shown to be invalid or a solvable issue.

So off the top of my head here are a few things I want to see come of this trip for me personally (possibly even selfishly).

1. I want to learn to be able to verbalize my faith without feeling uncomfortable doing so.
2. I feel as if my faith has become routine and stagnate. I feel as if I am going through the motions of my faith. I want to return with some fire for the Lord and a motivation to share enthusiastically.
3. I think I have taken my faith for granted so I want to appreciate what I have been given and share it with others in way that allows them have what I have.



Pastor Kevin Wendt, Missionary

Concordia Lutheran Church Pastor

I am going because our loving God of mission has raised up and surrounded me with people who amaze me.

On our travel teams, He humbles me with the men, women, and children through whom He has laid a foundation flexibility, adaptability and teachability in mission.

On this travel team He inspires me with Barb Johnson and her courage, Melanie Beck and her servant heart, Joe Milledge and his

tender tenacity, Gary Penner and his Timothy spirit, Carla Schaller and her willingness, Loretta Sassmanshausen and her selflessness, and Connor Sassmanshausen and her joy.

On our support team, He spurs me on with Julie Kratzman and her loving heart and Dan Dienelt and his meekness.

Beyond our team, He assures me with the people who are generous in prayer and giving.

These are people who are acting on the Holy Spirit compulsion to be His missionaries everywhere they go, leading Concordia to engage people with Jesus globally and locally.