

Greetings to my sponsoring churches! It has been a wonderful home leave and I have a lot of people to thank for that. My sisters have been wonderful. Jan has offered me a home (home base) and has been a great big sister and more than gracious host. Good company, good food and continuing to work her cyber-secretary magic. My sister Melinda and her husband Steve loaned me a vehicle, actually a big truck, so that I didn't have to rent a car for the four weeks that I spent in Minnesota visiting four of my sponsoring churches there. My sister Susan and her husband Thomas provided me a place to park and rides to and from the airport when I made my trips out to California and Colorado as well as Wisconsin and Chicago.

I also want to thank the people that opened their homes to me in California and Colorado and the congregations that warmly welcomed me to their pulpits, altars, and gave me opportunity to tell a part of the story of ministry in the Global Mission of the ELCA. It was wonderful to meet many of you and have the opportunity to share and learn. It was great to learn about the domestic missionaries of the church.

Part of the home leave includes the Summer Missionary Conference at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin. This is, for me, a wonderful reunion with colleagues that I see every two years and the opportunity to meet and interact with new mission personnel as they prepare to begin their ministries in places like Papua New Guinea, Japan, Senegal, Kenya, and Malaysia. It is a privilege to be at the dinner that honors mission personnel who are retiring: a teacher in Tanzania retiring after 32 years of service, a couple in pastoral ministry with 32 years in Kenya, Tanzania and Germany. My West Africa boss was honored as he leaves to assume the office of Bishop in the Rocky Mountain Synod.

This year I also spent a week in Chicago at the ELCA Church-wide Office.

That time included some training, a meeting with the Africa Team and some conversations about my new call within Global Mission. There is still a lot to be developed, but I'm moving to Tanzania in early 2013.

Arusha will be my base for a new venture within Global Mission. My assignment will be to act as International Coordinator of the Luther Health Care Program. (This is a working title – subject to change.) Global Mission is looking to help health care volunteers from the ELCA find a good match with the health care programs of our global partners.

The pilot will likely start next spring or summer with opportunities in Liberia, India and Tanzania. After the pilot, we hope to work with some of our other church partners in Africa and Asia.

Soon, I leave for some time in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey and then, on the 28th of August, I'm off to Liberia and Tanzania. I am grateful to God for all of you – please continue to keep me in your prayers. John