



TELLING THE STORY IN JERUSALEM

Years ago Lutheran missionaries were sent to start new churches around the world, and now those churches run their own seminaries and ministries. What, then, is the role of the ELCA missionary today?

Today's missionaries are doctors, nurses, teachers, educators and community organizers—and the ELCA sends them to work alongside other Lutherans only when an invitation is issued by one of the ELCA's global companion churches.

"Instead of approaching us for long-term people to help start and grow a church, [our global companions] are asking us to fill more specific technical positions," said Heidi Torgerson, ELCA director for global service. "Our fractured world needs healing. ELCA missionaries are agents of healing through the work they do."

Adrainne Gray and her husband, Ben, for example, are missionaries working in technical positions as communicators for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Whether they are taking photos, writing stories or preparing press releases, their charge is to connect the English-speaking Lutheran world to the reality of life for Arab Lutherans in Palestine, Jerusalem and Jordan. "The amazing thing is that [in spite of the conflict], our co-workers are joyful, hopeful people," Adrainne said. "They are living."

While the majority of ELCA missionaries are in their 20s, early 30s or close to retirement, the Grays are in the middle of their careers and raising their 14- and 11-year-old kids. They came to Jerusalem after Adrainne completed her training as a deaconess in 2015 and was looking for a call.

"We didn't have this part of the world on our radar at all, but when we saw the opening, we knew immediately that our talents fit its need," she said. "We wear the term 'missionary' proudly—it's central to the work of the church."

 [Follow the Gray family on their journey at thegraytones.com.](http://thegraytones.com)

Your Mission Support dollars are used by the ELCA churchwide organization to support the work of 225 ELCA missionaries in 44 countries around the world.