

Inside Guyana

Newsletter of Rev. Richard L. Young, ELCA / GM Companion Pastor in the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana

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| <u>Mailing Address:</u> 120 Hibiscus Street West Ruimveldt Georgetown Guyana | <u>Phone:</u> Country Code 592 (line) 231-0276 (cell) 646-3742 | <u>E-mail</u> revdocguy@usa.net |
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Tuesday, October 26, 2010

LET US CELEBRATE!!

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana Celebrates 276th Birthday

The two oldest members of Ebenezer Church, New Amsterdam, were called forward by Pastor Moonu to cut the ELCG birthday cake on Sunday October 17. The congregation's birthday also marks the anniversary of the ELCG. The Lutheran Church was brought to Guyana from Holland in 1743.



In the picture on the left, I am standing in front of the ELCG office in New Amsterdam with Pastor Errol Inshanally, former President of the ELCG, who is currently on academic leave. He is studying for a Master of Theology at United Theological College of the West Indies at Kingston, Jamaica on a scholarship from the Lutheran World Federation. The seminary in Jamaica is supported in part by the ELCA.

King of Glory Congregation Celebrates 50th Anniversary

This church is one that I serve in Ascension Parish. The history of King of Glory illustrates a typical path for a rural Lutheran congregation in Guyana. In September of 1960 the church received its charter from the ELCG. However, it had been gathering together for regular Sunday worship, Bible Study and fellowship for at least five years prior to that. During those years they had gathered in someone's house, or at one time in a tent. Even after having congregation status, they did not have this church building for another few years.



The congregation remained active for many years, but then due to the outmigration of many key families, the lack of consistent leadership and the pressures of modern society it slowly dwindled down until closing its doors in about the year 1995. Reopened and renewed beginning in 2005, the congregation today still faces challenges but is a church home to its members and a witness to its community.

The picture above shows the 50th Anniversary Celebration this past September. On the far right is Pastor Paul Moonu, the President of the ELCG and the visiting preacher for the occasion. Do not be fooled by the Christmas looking decorations above the windows. They are in fact Christmas decorations, but since they were the only thing on hand to decorate with, up they went on the last Sunday in September.



Following the service, members and guests gathered behind the church under a big shade tree and were served lunch. Next on the program were speeches and awards – a Guyanese specialty!



FLC / Tulsa & ELCG Celebrate 14 Years of Medical Mission Partnership

Over my time in Guyana many mission teams from the US have visited Guyana. By far the longest running and most consistent trips have been from Fellowship Lutheran Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Medical teams headed up by FLC have been coming to Guyana annually since 1996.



These teams have included physicians, dentists, optometrists, podiatrists, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, nurses, nurse's aides and other volunteers. The teams travel to different locations in Guyana offering free care, medicine, and medical devices at mobile clinic type settings. Above see the 2010 team as they leave an Amerindian Village more than 50 miles up the Corentyne River. On the right optometrists test vision and give new glasses. See the joy of serving and giving and receiving: Soli Dei Gloria.



Also frequent visitors are groups led by Chris Klafs from Florida Bahamas Synod, our ELCA Companion Synod. At left see some of her last group visiting with residents at Sand Hills, Demerara River.

Guyana makes a good destination for a mission trip; it is English speaking, not too far away and very welcoming. I have hosted mission groups from Oklahoma, Florida, California, Oregon, Arizona, and Texas, Montana and Pennsylvania.

Celebrate With Me As I Approach 10 Years in Guyana



What a great adventure and blessing for me! But the time has come for me to leave Guyana. Originally I was looking at an ending date of June 30, 2011 – the 10th anniversary of my beginning service with Global Mission. Then a complication came up with my Guyanese visa that made it look like I might have to leave in mid-March. Due to ELCA reorganization and belt tightening, I was asked by Global Mission to finish by December 31, 2010. By leaving a little early, another missionary in another assignment would not have to be brought home.

Leave-taking will be difficult but I am confident that it will all work out according to God's plan. I will be given good support by the ELCA as I relocate stateside, including full salary and benefits for six months while I adjust and look for work. During the time February to June 2011, I would be glad to come and visit your church and speak about my experiences with God's mission and activity in Guyana. More details about this will be coming to you in the months ahead.

Celebrate the Natural Wonders of Guyana

In the last newsletter I included a picture of a caiman found in a trench near my house. On the right see what kind of wildlife next showed up – an anaconda, local version of your stray deer or bear in the States. I suppose they saved the skin and ate the meat. Probably tasted like chicken!

Friends, I am a mixed bag of emotions as I think about leaving Guyana and all of you who have been such wonderful supporters over the years. Your words, your prayers, and your financial support have meant so much to me. God bless you all and bring you



Peace and Blessings, Pastor Young