

The Story of Christ the King Local Mission Partners

"Engaging in God's Mission with the growing diversity and ethnic ministries in the Twin Cities"



It all started when member, Pastor Richard Mork, challenged member Vern Rice to start a Local Mission Partner Team. Richard pointed out the excellent work that the Global Mission Team at Christ the King is doing and said he hoped we could also strengthen our partnerships with local ethnic ministries. Serving in the national church in the St. Paul Area Synod for local mission development, Richard told about the need for partnerships in the Hmong, Chinese and Latino ministries. Matthew 28 tells us to "Make disciples of all nations." While God's international mission continues to call us, we also have become increasingly aware that "The Nations are Here!" Although the population of our community is still majority white, the BIPOC population of New Brighton has increased from 19.9 % in 2010 to 31.2% in 2020.

After consulting with the pastors, Vern called a meeting of anyone interested in developing a Local Mission Partner Team. The St. Paul Area Synod mission team invited Vern to a national LMP event and learned the three key words guiding this work: Prayer, Presence and Presents. We were challenged to pray for each other, to be with each other at events and activities and to mutually share the gifts each partner can give. We were encouraged, not to develop dependence on each other, but to engage in mutually benefiting ministry.

So our small team began meeting with Hmong, Spanish and Chinese ministries in St. Paul. Through the confirmation ministry of former Pastor John Stiles, we also began a partnership with Redeemer Lutheran Church of north Minneapolis, a multicultural ministry with a large African American membership.

In order to engage the congregation in this vital ministry, the LMP Team requested having an annual Local Mission Partner Sunday similar to Global Mission Sunday. For the first few years, we invited leaders from our partner ministries to serve as preachers for the day. One year we invited Professor Dwight Zscheile of Luther Seminary. He told of growing up with no church affiliation but was challenged when a Christian group came to his college dormitory room and invited his involvement. He told of his concern for the unaffiliated in our neighborhood, He said, "Christ the King, you have been given a great gift in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Follow Christ into your neighborhood!" He recommended that we study Alan Roxburgh's book, *MISSIONAL: JOINING GOD IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD*. It was then one of our team members said "Maybe our neighborhood is our new partner." This led to Local Mission Partners playing a role in the congregation's annual Block Party. We called it "The Community of Nations Block Party" with our partners bringing their gifts of ethnic food, music and culture. After studying Roxburgh's book, our Block Party moved from Sunday to a weekday night and offered free food, music and culture, saying "Thanks for being our Neighbor! Come to the Great God Get Together!"

In succeeding years LMP also began partnership with the former Agora ministry at Luther Seminary which provided multicultural Christian Leadership education for immigrant members. Daily Work, an extremely effective job counseling ministry, also has become a major partner with us in recent years.

Our early years of involvement with Pueblo de Fe, a Spanish speaking ministry in St. Paul, evolved into the St. Paul Area Synod challenging CtK to begin Cristo Rey, a Spanish speaking ministry. Local Mission Partners was instrumental in establishing and is currently supporting this ministry that has become a major part of our church. After attending Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, IA, on Sunday, August 14, 2022, our Cristo Rey mission developer, Ana Becerra, was ordained an ELCA pastor!

Currently our Local Mission Partners include Cristo Rey, Eternal Flame Hmong Lutheran Church, Minnesota Faith Chinese Lutheran Church, and Daily Work, all located in St. Paul and Redeemer Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

Anyone interested in becoming a part of Local Mission Partners can go to Christ the King's website, lifeatctk.org, to learn about our work. You may join our monthly planning and fellowship meetings. To get a taste of our work, you also may join us at several events and service projects with our partners throughout the year. **Donations may be given to Christ the King with Local Mission Partners in the memo line.** Offering envelopes at Local Mission Partner Sunday also will be provided.

One of our most inspiring times was when our ELCA Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, was our 2014 Local Mission Partner Sunday preacher. Shortly after her election she said "We are an overwhelmingly European American church in a culture becoming increasingly more pluralist, and we need to find ways to get out of the way and welcome those who come from other cultures." **Please join us in this mission!**

Written by Vern Rice, member of, Christ the King Local Mission Partner Team, Christ the King Lutheran Church, New Brighton.