



## Epiphany devotions illuminate Christ's light

*"What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."* (John 1:3–5)

Winter. The days grow shorter, darker. The impulse to hope flickers, shadowed by illness, poverty, economic worries. Then, even when we think the darkness has won, the light dawns again, in the most unexpected of places. Life bursts forth in a stable-born savior, born to a poor unwed mother in a dark Bethlehem night, and the Herods and the Caesars of this world tremble. A new world is breaking in.



Photo: Julie Rowe

ELCA missionaries are called to walk in the light with their companions all over the world. This Epiphany season, a time that many celebrate the church as a light to the nations, you are invited to share devotions from mission personnel around the globe. May these simple stories, glimpses of grace and holy moments in ordinary life, illuminate Christ's light in your life.

Find these Epiphany devotions at [www.elca.org/globalmission/epiphany](http://www.elca.org/globalmission/epiphany).

The Baptism of Our Lord (1/10/10)	Rev. Viking Dietrich	Ghana	Luke 3:15–17
Epiphany 2 (1/17/10)	Rev. Justin and Kari Eller	Bolivia	Psalms 36:5–10
Epiphany 3 (1/24/10)	Dana Dutcher	Japan	1 Corinthians 12:12–31
Epiphany 4 (1/31/10)	Rev. Josh and Susan Magyar	Tanzania	Jeremiah 1:4–10
Epiphany 5 (2/7/10)	Taryn Montgomery	Slovakia	Luke 5:1–11
The Transfiguration of Our Lord (2/14/10)	Rev. Mark and Linda Nygard	Egypt	Matthew 17:1–9

Also available: The Global Mission Lenten series offers devotions, prayer petitions, soup recipes, worship ideas and photos from ELCA missionaries ([www.elca.org/globalmission/lent](http://www.elca.org/globalmission/lent)).

*The Rev. Julie Rowe is the Epiphany and Lenten series editor. A former missionary, she now serves as a program director for ELCA Global Mission.*

## Extreme makeover: hand in hand doing God's work in the world

I spend a great deal of time in airplanes. In my experience, in-flight conversations often begin with the question, "What do you do for living?" If I respond "I am a pastor," the conversation ends there. I've learned to answer this question with another question: "Have you watched the TV show Extreme Home Makeover?" Their faces light up. "Do you work for them?" they ask. "No," I reply, "but I do something similar."

In Extreme Home Makeover a team identifies a family in need and a house is built for them. The community comes together to offer their gifts and talents to assist. In the job my colleagues and I do, we work with people and communities all around the world, sharing gifts and talents to address needs. Response efforts include health-care services, primary and vocational education, access to clean water, food security, housing, micro-finance, and bringing hope by sharing the good news.

By this time my seatmates are engaged in the conversation and want to know more about this job. I really enjoy the moment they ask, "What kind of organization does all this?" "Most people call it the church," I reply. "I am a Lutheran pastor working in the global mission unit of our church."

### 3 ANSWERS

1. "Celebrating"
2. pages 14–15 and 18–19
3. \$200

*Find the questions on the reverse side.*

In one of these conversations I met "John" from Stow, Ohio. He is a Roman Catholic who grew up in a Lutheran home for orphaned children. There he found not only shelter and care, he found hope for life. To this day, John makes an annual contribution to ELCA Global Gifts to support our work among street children in Peru.

Thank you for your continued support to Global Mission Support: ELCA Missionary Sponsorship and ELCA Global Gifts. Your gifts allow ELCA missionaries to work alongside local companions sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in restoring people's lives. We are part of this Extreme Global Makeover, hand in hand, together!

*The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla is executive director for ELCA Global Mission.*

### A USEFUL URL

Open the "inspire" box at [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts) to give ELCA Good Gifts supporting Missionary Sponsorship.

## Extraordinary gifts

"On entering the house...they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh." (Matthew 2:11)

What unlikely callers the magi, superstitious astrologers, were. What unlikely baby gifts they carried. Yet, Christ's coming has always elicited a delightfully diverse guest list and an equally unique gift registry.

In this season of giving, I am especially grateful for these extraordinary gifts and givers. I give thanks for:

- Eric, a fourth-grade boy from North Dakota, who gave all of his summer baby-sitting money to support the missionaries in the Central African Republic.
- Lutherlyn Bible Camp, whose youth raised \$43,413 for the Emmanuel Housing Project in Nicaragua and to support ELCA missionary the Rev. Stephen Deal.
- Participants attending the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering, whose offerings have, among many other causes, supported an ELCA missionary for an entire year!

As we celebrate Christ's light for the world during the days of Epiphany, remember that generous gifts to ELCA Missionary Sponsorship help make Christ known at home and abroad. What extraordinary gift might you offer to pay homage to Christ Jesus, Immanuel?

Twila Schock is director for ELCA Global Mission Support.

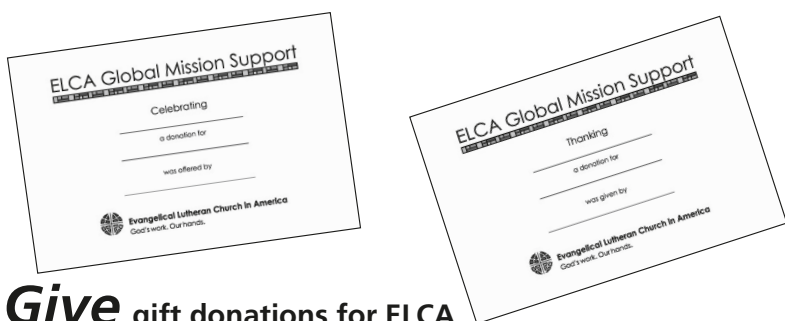


## A handy idea

Here's a "handy" model for praying with children. Place your hands together in prayer, with just the thumbs crossed. **Thumbs:** Thanksgiving ("Thank, you God for..."). **Index fingers:** For loved ones ("God bless..."). **Middle fingers:** For leaders (including teachers, pastors, and missionaries). **Ring fingers:** Intercessions ("Please help..."). **Little fingers:** For all the children of the world. During Epiphany, consider lighting a candle during prayer time.



Global Mission Support  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



### Give gift donations for ELCA Missionary Sponsorship.

- Give online at [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts) (see "inspire").
- Make your check out to "ELCA Missionary Sponsorship" and mail to ELCA Global Mission Support, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631.

### Get tribute cards to announce your "hand in hand" gift.

- Request one "Thanking," "Celebrating," "Honoring," or "Remembering" card for every \$10 gift donation for ELCA Missionary Sponsorship.
- To request the cards, e-mail [globalmissionsupport@elca.org](mailto:globalmissionsupport@elca.org) or call 800-638-3522, ext. 2657.

## 3 QUESTIONS

1. Four gift cards are available to announce your Global Mission Support gift donations: "Remembering," "Honoring," "Thanking," and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Where will you find ELCA Global Mission Support gift donations in the new *ELCA Good Gifts* catalog?
3. How much is the suggested *ELCA Good Gifts* donation to cover a month of rent for a missionary?

Find the answers on the reverse side.

## CONTACT

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