

Fact Sheet -Timeline of Companion Relationship

Lower Susquehanna Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Konde Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

1. The companion synod relationship links the Lower Susquehanna Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with the Konde Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.
2. As partners, we participate in each other's life and mission through communication, learning, and prayer. The relationship is mutual; we both give and receive as brothers and sisters in Christ.
3. The first contact between the Lower Susquehanna Synod and the Konde Diocese took place in 1990 when Bishop Guy S. Edmiston of the synod and Bishop Amon D. Mwakisunga of the diocese attended the Lutheran World Federation meeting in Curitiba, Brazil.
4. Out of that meeting grew the desire to be companions in Christ. The Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly enthusiastically adopted the companion synod relationship, and the Konde Diocese Council gave its blessing to the partnership.
5. In September 1991, Bishop Edmiston went to Tanzania to participate in the 100th anniversary celebration of mission work; while there, he visited the Konde Diocese.
6. In January 1993, Pastor Ambele Mwaipopo from the diocese arrived in the United States for a year and a half of study at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.
7. In August 1994, a synod delegation of clergy and laity visited the Konde Diocese for three weeks.
8. In May 1995, Bishop Mwakisunga was in the midstate for a two-day visit to the synod as part of a visit to the churchwide offices of the ELCA in Chicago.
9. In May 1996, Bishop Mwakisunga and his wife arrived in the synod for a month-long stay. They visited congregations, individuals, and tourist sights around central Pennsylvania. While here, the bishop preached at many Lutheran congregations and participated in the annual Synod Assembly.
10. In June 1996, during the annual Synod Assembly, Bishop Edmiston and Bishop Mwakisunga signed a Companions in Christ covenant, which formally cemented the companion relationship between the two church bodies.
11. On June 4, 1996, a sea container was filled with items from the Lower Susquehanna Synod to the Konde Diocese. Donations came from congregations, individuals, and businesses. The container was loaded with 293 boxes and individual items totaling 9779 pounds (4.9 tons) of materials.
12. In August 1996, another delegation of clergy and laity from the synod traveled to the Konde Diocese.
13. In 1997, congregations in the Lower Susquehanna Synod donated funds for the construction of a "Lower Susquehanna Synod House" in the Konde Diocese.
14. In 1998, the synod sent another sea container to the Konde Diocese. Among the items sent were computers, medical supplies, school equipment, worship materials. Total donation: 13 tons.
15. In 1999, the Rev. Timothy Seitz-Brown, his wife Ann, and their three children from the Lower Susquehanna Synod spent a year in the Konde Diocese as missionaries. Tim taught Bible Knowledge and Ann taught biology at Manow Lutheran Junior Seminary. Their family lived in the Lower Susquehanna Synod House.
16. In 2000, Jason Shutters, a member of one of the synod congregations, spent two months in the Konde Diocese where he taught computer skills to teachers and students at Manow Lutheran Junior Seminary, a secondary school.
17. For several summers, leaders from the Konde Diocese have come to one of the Lutheran camps in the synod to serve as a camp counselors.
18. In 2000, the Lower Susquehanna Synod Women of the ELCA hosted the Rev. Ruth Mwalwega, director of Women and Children in the Konde Diocese. Also visiting the synod at that time was the Rev. Immanuel Mwakatobe, a parish pastor in the Konde Diocese, who visited congregations throughout the synod.

19. In 2001, Martin Mwakaje, a teacher at Manow Lutheran Junior Seminary, arrived in the United States to study at Millersville University under the sponsorship of the synod. Martin finished his studies in mathematics and returned to Tanzania in January 2005. He is currently a beloved teacher at Manow.
20. In June 2002, Bishop Carol S. Hendrix from the Lower Susquehanna Synod and three other members of the synod traveled to the Konde Diocese for the consecration of the new bishop of the diocese, the Rev. Israel-Peter Mwakyolile. Bishop Hendrix participated in the consecration service. Assistants to the Bishop Pastors Thomas and Judith McKee participated in the installation for the Assistant to the Bishop Pastor Ezekiel Mwangosi.
21. In June 2003, the Lower Susquehanna Synod in assembly voted to send \$50,000 to the Konde Diocese for debt reduction.
22. In August 2003, the Rev. Erasto Mwaipopo from the Konde Diocese traveled from Tanzania to Gettysburg to work on his master's degree in sacred theology. He was sponsored by the Lower Susquehanna Synod and received a scholarship from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. He received his Master of Sacred Theology Degree in May 2005.
23. On September 2, 2003, Bishop Israel-Peter Mwakyolile and the Rev. Ezekiel Mwangosi arrived in the Lower Susquehanna Synod for a three-week visit. During that time they visited with pastors, laity, and congregations; attended a Synod Council meeting; preached and presided; visited a Lutheran Social Ministry Organization; and took in tourist sights in central Pennsylvania.
24. Groups from the Lower Susquehanna Synod have visited in the Konde Diocese every year since 2002.
25. Throughout the years of the companion relationship, the synod and the diocese have exchanged sermons, worship materials, prayer petitions, and letters.
26. More than 40 congregations in the Lower Susquehanna have companion relationships with congregations in the Konde Diocese. They exchange letters, worship materials, and companion items.
27. The Medical Needs Task Force of the Lower Susquehanna Synod has sent two a "virtual sea containers" of \$10,000 to the Konde Diocese. Monies collected are sent to Itete Hospital in the diocese to purchase much-needed medical equipment, medicines, and supplies, as well as to provide several scholarships for persons studying to be nurses and other medical personnel.
28. In October 2003, the Rev. Judith McKee, assistant to the bishop, Lower Susquehanna Synod, Pastor Sally Gausmann, and Barbara Nixon spent three weeks in Tanzania while attending a companion synods consultation in Moshi and visiting the Konde Diocese.
29. Also in October 2003, Craig Johnson, a member of Christ Lutheran Church, Shrewsbury, spent five weeks in the Konde Diocese to support the companionship and to evaluate administrative and fiscal procedures at the main office and in Konde institutions and projects.
30. In January 2004, Pastor Judith McKee and Craig Johnson attended an international partnership meeting in Hamburg, Germany, where his report and recommendations were accepted as the basis for ongoing dialogue and a continuing review of the relationship. A follow-up session was held in June 2004.
31. Pastor John and Dr. Annabelle Wenzke volunteered in the Konde Diocese between June and November 2004. They held seminars for pastors in each of the Konde Diocese Districts.
32. Ms. April Trout and her son served as short-term volunteers at Itete Hospital during the summer of 2004. Emily Bitner spent several months teaching English at Manow Lutheran Secondary School.
33. In October, 2004, Pastor Thomas McKee, secretary of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, and a group from the synod visited the diocese. Pastor McKee preached for the installation of the General Secretary of the Konde Diocese, Otinel Mlimba.
34. In November 2005, Pastors Thomas and Judith McKee attended a partner consultation at Matema and attended the Diocese Assembly, also in Matema.
35. In January 2005, CJ Seitz-Brown, a high school senior, returned to Manow to tutor students in English and computer science. He was there for several months before returning home to graduate and go on to college.
36. Pastor Melkezedik Joel Mbilinyi studied for his STM degree at Gettysburg Seminary beginning in September 2005, and receiving his degree in May 2007.

37. Pastor Meshack Njinga, treasurer of the Konde Diocese, studied accounting at York College in 2005-2006. He was sponsored by St. Paul Lutheran Church, York. While he was in York, St. Paul developed a partial scholarship program for children of pastors and other church workers in the diocese.
38. In July 2006, five persons from the synod visited the diocese and accompanied Bishop Israel-Peter Mwakyolile, Pastor Erasto Mwaipopo, and several pastors and evangelists from the Western Mission District on a mission trip to mission areas around Kamsamba.
39. In the fall of 2006 several persons from the diocese visited the synod. Bishop Israel-Peter Mwakyolile and his wife, Pastor Ngulonda Peter, visited many of the congregations of the synod. Pastor Mmeta, district pastor of Mwakalele District, visited congregations in the synod who have companion congregations in his district.
40. In June 2007, a group of eight persons visited the diocese, with most of them visiting the companion congregations of their congregations.

Contributions from members and congregations of the Lower Susquehanna Synod continue to support students studying at Manow Lutheran Secondary School, other student scholarships, provide supplemental help for salaries of pastors and other church workers, provide money for medical needs, and other such ministries. Companion congregations often send financial gifts to their companions in the diocese to help with a variety of needs and ministries in those congregations.

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