

Inspired

Spring 2024

Stories of encountering Christ in global mission



Living Bridges

By Deacon Mickey Friesen
Director, Center for Mission



Center for Mission Director since 2001.

When I think of the work of the Center for Mission, the image of a living

bridge comes to mind. The Center for Mission is part of an international network called the Pontifical Mission Societies, which connects us to the universal mission of the Church. The word 'pontifical' comes from a root word that means 'bridge.' Our role is to build bridges of faith between the local Church and the universal Church beyond our borders.

One of the bridges is the way we gather financial and spiritual support to assist more than 1,150 mission diocese in more than 100 countries. Throughout the year, we send your donations and prayers to support young and developing churches which are working to establish the Church's ministries in remote areas

throughout the world. We foster and develop new leaders to serve the people through education and



compassionate service to those in need.

We build bridges for those from our Archdiocese who feel called to serve

in foreign mission as a priest, sister, brother, layperson or as families (yes, we have families serving together as missionaries). We help to equip missionaries with the support they need to be able to travel and

sustain themselves as witnesses of the faith and ministers of the Gospel.

We build bridges of faith by animating the Church in mission around the world and offering compelling stories to folks in our own local Church, showing them we are essentially connected to our brothers and sisters in all other lands. We deepen our sense of being Catholic and part of the universal Church. We provide encounters of faith to our schools and parishes, making

it possible for people from our archdiocese to go on a mission trip to see the Church as mission first hand.

We also foster bridges of solidarity between our Archdiocese

and particular churches. As an Archdiocese, we continue to have partnerships with the Church in



Venezuela, the Archeparchy of Damascus, Syria and the Diocese of Kitui, Kenya. This spring we are celebrating 20 years of partnering

with the Church in Kitui, Kenya. This partnership has allowed us to not only share resources, but also share our faith and visits.

In this edition of our newsletter, we strive to share

more information about the living bridges we have built to share God's mission around the world. Thank you for supporting our efforts to connect everyone we touch to God's mission throughout the world.



The Center for Mission exists to build bridges of faith, hope and love to the Church around the world - sharing the living water of faith with our brothers and sisters across many borders and oceans.

Questions? Please contact Kim Williams at williamsk@archspm.org or 651-291-4451.

The Many Bridges in my Life

By Kim Williams
Operations Manager



As the new Operations Manager at the Center for Mission, I focus not only on operations, but also on communications. I grew up in White Bear Lake, MN

attending St. Pius X and eventually joining the parish staff as a pastoral minister. I served the parishioners in this role for nearly 25 years prior to joining the staff at the Center for Mission.

I am married and we have one daughter who is an EMT, soon to be paramedic, as well as a firefighter and rescue diver. Yes, my husband and I are incredibly proud of her.

I consider myself to be a Jill of All Trades. I have worked on 20+ Habitat for Humanity Homes, as well as designing and building my own home with my husband. We live in a rural area and are on our way to the goal of being a self-sustained hobby farm. In addition to construction, I also enjoy just about any handcraft sewing, knitting, beading, glass fusing, stained glass, and have even tried my hand at wool spinning, though I considered that an epic fail. I also enjoy being the accompanist for my youngest dog, who loves to 'sing' Ave Maria when I play it on the piano. He does have a few other tunes in his repertoire.

As an undergrad in college, I

studied German, International Business, and Psychology. I achieved fluency in German and also studied Russian and Spanish. My hope is to learn Italian and Swahili as well. As a graduate student, I studied Applied Behavioral Analysis, with a focus on Organizational Behavior Management. In 2005 we adopted our first rescue dog. I fell in love with and started volunteering for a small rescue on a reservation in northern MN. I am currently in the process of incorporating my own nonprofit pet rescue as my long-term retirement plan.

God has led me to many different careers throughout my life, camp counselor at Lager Waldsee German language summer camp,



German teacher at the International Institute of MN, personnel coordinator for a home health care agency, manager of a fast-food restaurant, behavior therapist with autistic children, and most

recently as the pastoral minister at my home parish of St. Pius X. While my various careers don't seem to be very connected, God has taught me valuable life lessons through each career. I loved my role of accompaniment as a pastoral minister and know that it will serve me well

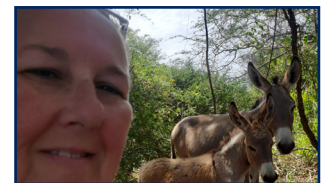


in my new role with the Center of Mission. In the past few years, I've been able to coordinate several mission trips to both Guatemala and

Belize. Last summer I was blessed to be a delegate for our Archdiocese and travel to Kitui, Kenya. I have been involved with the Kitui Partnership since 2010, when our parish hosted delegates from Kitui. The trip to Kitui however, changed my life and led



me ultimately to my current position with the Center for Mission. The experiences of witnessing the global Church in different countries has ignited a fire to expand my mission field from working with people on an individual level to a desire to serve the global mission of the Universal Church. Each career has been an opportunity to help build



a bridge between people and Our Savior, either through direct conversations about faith or leading by example, always praying that I can see Christ in others and more importantly, that they may see Christ reflected through me.

Christ calls us in Matthew 28:19 to 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...' I am excited by the opportunity to make connections with others throughout the world. Serving as the hands and feet of Christ by building bridges of faith between our local Church and our brothers and sisters in other countries seeking the Good News of the Gospel.

I look forward to the opportunity to serve you and hopefully one day to meet each of you in person.

Our Partnership with the Diocese of Kitui, Kenya

By Janine Ricker
Global Mission Outreach Coord.



What began as notes on a napkin over lunch in 2003 has become one of the longest diocesan solidarity partnerships in existence. Our relationship with the

Diocese of Kitui, Kenya, celebrates its 20th Anniversary this year, reaching a milestone for a ministry that has touched the lives of hundreds.

When Catholic Relief Services called Deacon Mickey Friesen, Director of the Center for Mission, back in 2003 asking if he wanted to enter into a global solidarity partnership with a diocese in Africa, he was intrigued.



"We were learning about the US Bishops *Called to Global Solidarity* (1997) and *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* (2001). There was an explicit call to dioceses to become more personally engaged and partner with the Church in Africa. We were also witnessing a surge of interest in our parishes regarding partnering with the Church beyond our borders. All of this together led us to talk with Archbishop Flynn about moving forward." Deacon Mickey then contacted Dale Hennen, who had missionary experience and was also the Director of Rural Life for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, they along with Mike

Haasl, also from the Center for Mission, sat down over lunch and imagined what such a partnership might look like (recording their meeting on a napkin).

Following a suggestion from Archbishop Flynn, they decided to solicit help from parishes in the Southeast Deanery of the Archdiocese, after receiving their support, moved forward with plan to partner with the Diocese of Kitui, Kenya. The partnership was formalized in 2004 and has served as a bridge between Catholics in Kitui



and Minnesota ever since, enabling us to build relationships based on our shared faith.

The partnership allows our two dioceses to share with one another our lives, cultures, faith, and resources. We have centered our sharing on water, as here in MN it is so plentiful, while in Kitui it is faced with ongoing drought and limited access to clean water. Through the partnership, lifelong friendships have been made and we have learned about *and* from one another. Julie Woodruff, chair of the Kitui Leadership Team said, "This twenty-year global solidarity partnership has taught me that relationships across continents can be built and sustained if persons are willing to learn about, appreciate, and respect each other's cultural differences, and discover through sharing stories of faith,

experiences and resources, how we are more alike than different. It has deepened by faith and broadened my perspective of the universal church."



Deacon Mickey credits the longevity of the partnership to how it was formed and managed.

"We founded this partnership on a principle of mutuality. This meant that we are equal partners, rooted in baptism, called together to share our gifts with each other. We discern and carry out all activities together. We also believe that everything we do is for the sake of deepening and growing our relationship in faith together. The power of the partnership is in building relationships. This partnership has really been a concrete way for us to experience what it means to be Catholic."



For more information on the partnership, please contact Janine Ricker, Global Mission Outreach Coordinator, at 651-291-4504 or rickerj@archspm.org





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