



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

August 5, 2019

Dear Companion in Ministry,

Warm greetings from the Global Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

For over 30 years, the ELCA has worked alongside companion churches and institutions around the world to help provide educational opportunities for established and emerging leaders. In partnership with our global companions, the ELCA International Leaders Program awards scholarships to promising individuals who are nominated by their churches/institutions. These scholarship recipients pursue study in a variety of academic fields at institutions around the world and then return home to continue their vital work alongside their sending communities.

The ELCA is excited to invite your church to partner with us in an important focus area within the scholarship program: The **International Women Leaders (IWL) initiative**. This initiative—which is a partnership between ELCA Global Mission, educational institutions, and global companion churches like yours—will increase the number of women supported by ELCA scholarships and educational opportunities each year. Knowing that women continue to play a crucial role in the life of the church and society, we hope to accompany our partners around the world as we together emphasize the importance of education and capacity building for women leaders.

There are several components of the International Women Leaders initiative, and each component aims to create opportunities for women from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences. We are contacting you today to inform you about the main component of the initiative: a scholarship program for young women to pursue a four-year bachelor's degree at an ELCA college or university in the United States. The next class of recipients will start their study in August of 2020.

By receipt of this letter, the International Leaders Program staff is pleased to invite you to nominate young women leaders from your church, for this International Women Leaders scholarship. Your help in identifying and endorsing promising women candidates is essential.

Because of the nature of ELCA college and university campuses, there are a few primary characteristics that make an individual a good fit for this particular opportunity. We recommend that you and your church seek out women candidates who fit, at least somewhat, the following characteristics:

- **Age:** Because most ELCA colleges and universities have a traditional U.S. undergraduate age range, we recommend that applicants fall between the ages of 17 and 23 years old. We also recommend (but do not require) that applicants are unmarried and without children, as this scholarship supports individual recipients.
- **Language:** Applicants should have very strong English language abilities, as all instruction will take place in English. Applicants will likely be required to take a standardized English language exam.
- **Educational Level:** Applicants should have completed secondary school (high school) by August 2020 and should be interested in beginning a four-year bachelor's (undergraduate) degree.
- **Leadership:** Applicants should have a strong track record of leadership skills and/or should show strong potential as leaders, within their communities and within their church.
- **Opportunity:** The primary targets for this scholarship are individuals who might otherwise be financially unable to pursue an undergraduate degree.
- **Commitment:** This scholarship is a four-year commitment. Applicants should be willing to spend four years living in the United States, from August 2020 to June 2024. (Though students are welcome to visit home during school holidays.) Applicants should also show a track record of commitment to the church and should be prepared to contribute their skills and expertise back to the church during and after the study program.

The International Women Leaders initiative provides full tuition and living scholarships. In partnership with the college/university, ELCA Global Mission will cover the full cost of: tuition, school fees, housing at the base rate, food, books, supplies, essential living expenses, health insurance, airfare at the beginning and end of the degree program, and airfare for one return visit to the home country at the mid-point of the degree program.

The application process begins with an online application form. This form must be completed and returned to ELCA International Leaders Program staff by **October 15, 2019**. After the scholarship application has been reviewed, candidates will be contacted about the next steps, which will include a separate application for admission to an ELCA college or university. We are still working to finalize the list of ELCA institutions that will be receiving scholarship recipients, and we will be happy to share more institution-specific details with applicants in the coming months.

ELCA scholarship applications are submitted online through the GrantMaker system. We no longer accept paper applications. It is important that you read the second attachment to this email (titled "Welcome to ELCA GrantMaker"), which provides step-by-step instructions for accessing and completing the scholarship applications online. **Please give a copy of the "Welcome to ELCA GrantMaker" document to any individual who you endorse to apply for an ELCA scholarship.** Please contact us if you have any questions about how to use the online application system. Specifically, **please email us if your applicant has any difficulty accessing the online application. We are committed to ensuring that the application process is accessible, even to those with limited internet access.** We can make accommodations in some cases. You will find our contact information below.

We would also like to emphasize that the ELCA's "traditional" scholarship program continues, as normal, alongside this new initiative. We strongly encourage you, as always, to provide nominations for people

of all genders, all ages, and various life experience (including individuals wishing to study in or near your home country), who will be considered among our larger body of scholarship applicants. These types of request should be submitted via the Long-Term Scholarship or Short-Term Scholarship applications, which were recently shared with you in a separate letter via email, and which are also due by October 15, 2019.

Your church is invited to endorse a maximum of three (3) young women to apply for the International Women Leaders scholarship in 2019. If you endorse more than one applicant, we also ask you to provide us with a priority ranking of your applicants; you may either send that ranking to us directly via email or indicate your priority on the church endorsement form. Please note that, in addition to these three International Women Leader endorsements, your church may endorse up to an additional three (3) applicants for the separate traditional scholarship program (explained in our separate letter). In other words, you may endorse a maximum of six (6) applicants total, between the two scholarship programs.

Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions or comments regarding the International Women Leaders initiative. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the support of women leaders in your church and around the world, and thank you for your continued partnership with ELCA Global Mission.

Sincerely,



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Cc: Global Mission Area Desk Directors
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