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## A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP May 2023

This Month's Writer: Pastor Mark Nygard

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### Come Celebrate a Double Church Birthday!

The Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Cameroon and Central African Republic are 100 years old this year, and we are throwing a double birthday party of them. On July 7-9, 2023, Lutherans from the United States and Canada will be gathering in the Twin Cities to mark the event, and we'd like you to be there.

It was March 8, 1923, actually, when they landed in Douala, Cameroon — Norwegian-Americans with names like Adolphus Gunderson from Stoughton, Wisconsin, his bride Marie Gunderson from Bode, Iowa, and Anne Olsen and Olette Berntsen, Lutheran deaconesses from Brooklyn. Troubled by the lack of Christian witness across a wide band of African geography known as “the Sudan,” they set out to share their faith with those who had not yet heard. After 26 days of walking bush trails and exploring places to begin their work, they settled down in a town called Mboula. Soon dozens, then hundreds, then thousands of African believers joined them, and our Lutheran World Federation companion churches in Cameroon and Central African Republic are the result.

And it all began 100 years this year. How often do you get to celebrate an event like that? This summer is the time.

We'll be arriving in the Twin Cities Friday, July 7th, and staying in the Hilton Garden Inn in Minneapolis, just across the street from Central Lutheran Church. Saturday morning we'll be bused to Luther Seminary for A Day of Song and Seminar. The five North American companion synods have invited Cameroonian church president Baiguele Jean, Central African church president Ngoe Joseph, and two women's leaders, Sodea Joëlle Kyria and Francine Grace Yaimann, to be present. You will hear them talk about current opportunities and challenges in their home churches. You will get to ponder how they do evangelical outreach so effectively in their context and wonder how we might do it better in ours. You will have a chance to be part of a missionary supper that evening before being bussed back to the Hilton. Sunday morning festal services at Central Lutheran will include ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton as preacher. And we will conclude our weekend over coffee and fellowship at Central before saying our farewells.

It's the event of a century. Again, we'd like you to be there. Two online registration sites are available:

<https://sdsynod.org/sudanmissioncentennial> for general registration, and <https://sdsynod.org/globalyouth2023> for a unique program for youth. Check them out. And welcome!

Pastor Mark Nygard, retired ELCA missionary  
on behalf of the organizing committee



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### Synod Assembly 2023

Sat. June 3 – Sun. June 4, 2023  
Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center  
Pre-Assembly Workshops Fri. June 2  
Registration now open at  
[www.wndsynod/synod-assembly](http://www.wndsynod/synod-assembly)