

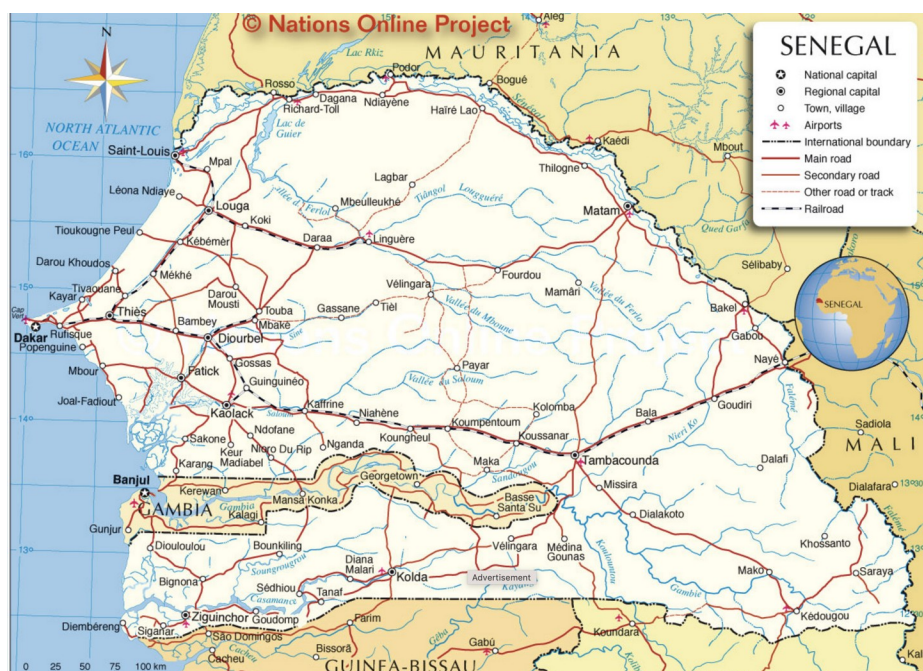
## Missionaries We Support



### Reverend Mytch Dovelier, Young Adult in Global Mission Coordinator, Senegal

Reverend Mytch Dovelier is an ordained Minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America with strong experience in religious work in the U.S. and missionary work in West Africa, Senegal. She has high-level training in theology and project management, community organizing, and community development: focus on increasing community resilience on issues of social equity, health and wellness, ecosystem services, economic health, and physical infrastructure.

Her experience living in other countries enables her to develop good communication skills, positive interaction between people of different faith communities, and learn different languages and cultures. French and Creole are her mother tongues, and she is fluent in English. She also speaks and writes Spanish and understands Wolof, Portuguese, and Italian.



Located on the farthest western point of the African continent, Senegal is bordered to the north and east by the Senegal River, from which it derives its name. The economy is mostly centered on natural resources, with agriculture being a main sector. Senegal produces peanuts, cashews, rice, millet, corn, sugar cane, cotton, green beans, tomatoes, melons, and mangoes, among other crops.

The current socio-political context of Senegal has been impacted both by the influence of Sufi Islam as well as European colonialism, slavery, and centuries of exploitation. Yet, the Senegalese people are proud of their identity as people of hospitality (“Teranga” in the Wolof language) and peace. Young adults who serve in this program gain insight into interreligious relationships, sustainable development, and ongoing colonialism and global racism.

## **Partners**

The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program is hosted by the Lutheran Church of Senegal (LCS) and Senegalese Lutheran Development Services (SLDS). The Lutheran church is about 50 years old and encompasses many new and more established congregations taking shape throughout the country. In addition, LCS is engaged in local language education, community development and interfaith relationships. Young adults serving with the Lutheran Church are primarily placed alongside Lutheran ministry leaders and programs.

Senegalese Lutheran Development Services cover a wide breadth of development work currently taking place in the country. SLDS primarily works in three areas: primary health care, education, and community development. Young adults serving with SLDS will live and work with both Christian and Muslim colleagues and families.

Each young adult is also connected with a local congregation of the Lutheran Church in Senegal. Young adults are encouraged to participate in the life of the congregation and the church, which may include teaching English, participating in youth camps, and learning about Bible translation and literacy work.

Because Senegal is largely Sufi Muslim, young adult volunteers are also be immersed in interfaith relationships and work and live alongside Muslims daily. Volunteers learn what it means to be a religious minority and how community faith leaders in Senegal are working together to serve those who are marginalized.

Young adults who serve in the YAGM Senegal program work in roles identified by the Lutheran Church in Senegal and Senegalese Lutheran Development Services. Some of the service opportunities include:

- Working in a community center that provides programming and opportunities for youth, women, and girls.
- Serving as a classroom aid in a preschool through elementary school
- Supporting primary health care projects
- Teaching English at a Roman Catholic elementary school
- Participating in HIV/AIDS support groups
- Working at a cattle farm and milk processing facility

- Teaching computer and English classes
- Accompanying faith formation projects
- Assisting in differently abled empowerment programs

## Language

While French is the colonial language, spoken in government meetings and schools, Young Adults in the Senegal program learn one of the local languages, such as Wolof, Serer, or Peuhlar, rather than French. Young adults are encouraged to study the basics of French before arriving in Senegal.



## Reverend Rachel Eskesen and Reverend Zachary Courter

### Europe Desk, Germany

Reverend Eskesen is a graduate of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity. She is an ordained ELCA minister. She is passionate about strategic planning, operations management, and fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that are globally informed and contextually implemented. She is the Desk Director for Europe for the ELCA.

Reverend Zachary Courter is the former YAGM coordinator for Eastern Europe. He supports Reverend Rachel's work at the Europe desk.

Rachel and Zachary are parents of kindergartener Dorothy.

**The ELCA Europe Desk** continues to prioritize peacebuilding, responding to needs created by the Russia-Ukraine War and uplifting peace initiatives that have been ongoing in Central Europe since the Yugoslav Wars decades ago.

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to displace families, the path to reconciliation between the two nations seems uncertain. Yet hope persists. Our ministry partners offer holistic care, addressing such acute needs as food, shelter, hygiene supplies, integration

support and the long process of emotional, psychological, and spiritual healing from the trauma of war.

Meanwhile the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovenia and the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia are weaving a tapestry of peacebuilding and women's empowerment after the Yugoslav Wars. In the ELCA- supported program Women to Women in Ministry and Mission, women from different churches and ethnicities forge trust and become advocates for change in their communities.

The pathways to peace vary, yet the Europe Desk maintains its dedication to supporting partners' initiatives in peacebuilding, gender justice and migration justice. We continue to accompany our partners, who are working toward transformative change, reigniting hope in war-torn communities and sowing seeds of future peace.