

Befriend a Mission

Pastors in the United States spend a lot of time alone. They work alone to prepare sermons and Bible studies. They sit in their office getting themselves organized for meetings and various events. When a member drops in for an unannounced visit, most Pastors welcome the interruption. I feel the isolation even more acutely as a world missionary. There aren't any church members that might drop in for a visit. I work remotely with the leaders of national churches across the continent of Africa.



That's why I jumped at the opportunity to give an online presentation this month. The LWMS Central Office passed on my name to the LWMS Grand Canyon West Circuit part of the Befriend a Mission (BAM) program. The women of the circuit pray for the mission and missionary. They also and encourage him and his family in various ways for a period of two years. Their cards and gifts always seem to arrive at just the right moment.

I'd given a few online mission presentations before so I felt comfortable with the format. Any group can host a virtual world mission speaker regardless of their

proximity to the Upper Midwest. The members of the LWMS Grand Canyon West Circuit gathered at Arizona Lutheran Academy in Phoenix, AZ. I gave my presentation from my living room in Lilongwe, Malawi. I was able to sleep in my own bed that night and preach the next morning.



Most WELS congregations have a reliable connection to the internet, a digital projector, and speakers on hand. The LWMS Grand Canyon West Circuit used Zoom to host their online mission rally. Other platforms like Google Meet or Facebook live are viable alternatives. It's vital to find someone who knows what they're doing and get them to help you with the setup. It's also important that they can also be there during the presentation in case things don't go as planned. We ran into some minor audio glitches the day of the event. Nevertheless, I was able to field questions from both the live and virtual audience in attendance that day. They were able to hear me clearly.

Pastor Ben Foxen, the Spiritual Advisor to the Grand Canyon West Circuit, was a great help. He facilitated the connection with the WELS Missions Promotions Office and was my main point of contact. As a former world missionary, Pastor Foxen understands what my wife and I are facing here. He wrote me the following: "Seeing and hearing about your blessings and challenges and those of the people you serve reminded me of my times in Russia. The challenges were different in some ways, similar in others. The blessings of seeing God at work in the hearts of his people, though, are universal. Your presentation brought all that back for me."

I am grateful for the friendship of the members of the LWMS Grand Canyon West Circuit. We are closely connected to each other through Christ (and the internet) as we carry out his Great Commission.

You can request a live or virtual mission speaker for your next event at www.wels.net/speaker-request

Missionary John Roebke lives in Malawi and manages the Communications for One Africa Team

Please pray for those working in fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news and receive updates. Learn more about our mission fields in Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts at <https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>