

HIV AND AIDS CONFERENCE IN THAILAND

The Conference on HIV and AIDS among ELCA Companions in the Asia Region and beyond was held from September 21- 25, 2015 at the Venue of Church of Christ, 75th Anniversary Building; Chiang Mai, Thailand. The conference hosted by ELCA – Global Mission under the theme of “Our Positive Stories: Reducing stigma by building community.” Rev. Dr. Y. Franklin Ishida, Dr. Carl Stecker, Dr. Rebecca Duerst, Rev. Dr. Chandran Martin Paul and Dr. Ulysses Burley were the conference organizers, moderators and resource persons. Staff members of ELCA – GM and Church of Christ in Thailand jointly organized the conference well and it was highly appreciated by the participants.

Other moderators and resource persons from Thailand were Dr. Prawate Khid-darn, Dr. Basaria Lumbangaol, Sister Mercedes Placino, Mr. Phramaha Boonchualy Doojal, Dr. Suchart Setthamalinee and Mr. Deaconess Nurhayati including Rev. Dr. Deenabandhu Manchala, UCC.

Main discussing point of the conference was to increase the knowledge about the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Asia and globally, best practices of HIV and AIDS programs and the importance of the faith community in advocacy efforts. Participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Thailand and the United States represented their churches and organizations.

Participants from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia, the Evangelical

Church in Colombia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa served as special resources at the gathering.

Mr. Pius Seroo – Executive Director and Mr. AKM Aminul Haque – Program Development Coordinator of Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh were also participated in this conference and Mr. Pius Seroo had the privileged to represent his country through a PowerPoint



presentation on HIV and AIDS. It was noticed in all the sessions that there has been progress in the response to HIV and AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, but challenges still prevailed among several populations with disproportionately high HIV infection rates. The stigma that surrounds HIV and AIDS often creates barriers to prevention, care and support.



of “Conference Statement.”

The conference included worship, testimonials, country presentations and visits to local institutions dealing with HIV. It was an opportunity to listen and learn from the sharing of best practices and positive stories from participants and finally the conference was concluded with the best and valuable milestone