

Dear Supporting Congregations,

These have been intense months! This summer I was in the states for six weeks for my first home assignment since the pandemic began. It was wonderful to be able to visit in person and see old and new friends. I am grateful for the ongoing interest and support for our health ministry in Chile and also that everyone was so willing to wear the colorful bandanas for EPES 40th anniversary (Please see page 3 of the Update for photos and a brief summary of my visit).

At the end of my home assignment, I spent a week at the Becoming Conference organized by the ELCA Service and Justice Home Area. The conference brought together church-wide staff, global mission personnel and community members to strategize and prioritize work around five core justice areas: Migration Justice, Economic Justice, Racial Justice, Gender Justice and Environmental Justice.

After the conference, I hurried back to Chile for the historic constitutional referendum on September 4th. Since 86% of Chileans had expressed the need for a new constitution (to replace the one imposed 42 years ago by the military dictatorship), we were very hopeful that it would be approved and we would be able to celebrate all the positive implications for health, the environment, education, indigenous rights and human rights in general. But, it was not to be. The campaign to reject the new constitution spread outright lies about the new proposal and outspent the approval campaign by ten to one. We were devastated by the stunning defeat. The question now is how to come up with a draft that will be acceptable to a majority of Chileans.

In the meantime, EPES' work continues in mental health, nutrition and food sovereignty, and human (especially migrant) rights. I invite you to read about our work in the Update and share it with others in your congregations.

We have also been very busy preparing for our 40th anniversary. We will host an evening to give thanks together with health promoters, leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, international guests and ELCA representatives on Thursday, November 24th (Thanksgiving!) and on the 26th over 200 people will join us for a celebration with music, stories, greetings and memories of four decades of working for justice, dignity and health.

As we look back, we are grateful for all the congregations that have accompanied us on this 40-year journey. We wouldn't be here without your interest, prayers and support.

Have a joyous Thanksgiving!

Karen

ELCA Global Mission Personnel in Chile