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- From the National Office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

MISSIONARY OPPORTUNITY FOR PERU; LONG-TERM MISSIONARY SERVING ILEP, REV. KATHARINE BERGBUSCH, TO RETIRE

Winnipeg, 15 December 2006 -- In a few short months, The Rev. Katharine Bergbusch will leave a place she has called home for the past twelve years. Rev. Bergbusch, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) Long-term Missionary serving the Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church (ILEP) will be returning to Canada. At the request of the ILEP, the ELCIC has posted a new missionary opportunity for Peru focusing on liturgy and church music and hopes to find a pastor to fulfill this important area of ministry. In addition, the missionary will serve as the pastor of an ILEP congregation in the city of Lima.

The upcoming retirement of Rev. Bergbusch will affect most the people who have come to know her during her stay in Iquitos, Peru these past three years; evidence of which was deeply felt when the ELCIC's Assistant to the Bishop for Ecumenical Relations, The Rev. Paul Johnson, was there to visit in August of this year.

In a report on his visit, Rev. Johnson mentions many conversations, "about the future, about Katharine's imminent departure." He notes, "these folks are sad to think about the fast approaching reality. They will miss [Rev. Bergbusch], but they recognize that she will leave, and so they too [ask] questions about what might happen next. They never put it into so many words, but an underlying concern was clearly, will we be abandoned?"

The ILEP has also requested that the ELCIC support an ILEP pastor who will move to Iquitos to take on the vacant role there after Rev. Bergbusch's retirement next year. The ELCIC has agreed to do this as well through the *Amazon Mission Sponsorship* initiative.

In leaving Peru, the place she has called home for the past twelve years, this will not only be a big change for Rev. Bergbusch, but also, "a big change for our sisters and brothers in that tiny but vibrant church" comments Rev. Johnson. "In all these tasks and commitments we need your help. We need your prayers. We need your financial generosity, your sharing of the resources that God has entrusted to you for our mission in the world, to make it all possible. Finally, we need your help in spreading the word about our need for another pastor, a person willing to leave Canada and to give flesh to our partnership with ILEP."

Following Rev. Bergbusch's return to Canada in March of next year, she will give presentations, primarily in her sponsoring congregations, and participate in church events to share her story and experiences in Peru. By hearing about her experiences, ELCIC members will learn about the work of ELCIC Mission in the World and find out how to engage in mission for others by sponsoring the new Canadian missionary and the new ILEP "Amazon mission pastor".

If you are interested in finding out more about the opportunity to serve *In Mission for Others* as an ELCIC Long-term Missionary, please view the complete description of the Missionary Opportunity for Peru: www.elcic.ca/mission/MIW-DecAD.pdf

Find out more about the ELCIC Mission in the World program by visiting the ELCIC website: www.elcic.ca/mission/index.html

A Brief Bio of Rev. Bergbusch:

The Rev. Katharine Bergbusch moved in April 1994 to Lima, Peru where she began life as a missionary of the ELCIC with the Peruvian Lutheran Evangelical Church (ILEP). Founded in 1990, ILEP is a small but growing church with seven pastors serving several congregations.

Rev. Bergbusch provided guidance and theological education to pastors and lay workers that are leading and guiding the ministry of ILEP congregations. She accompanied the leadership of ILEP in conflict resolution and assisted in administrative matters such as revisions to the constitution and ordination requirements.

In recognition of her significant contribution to the Lutheran church in Peru, Rev. Bergbusch was presented with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 2004 by the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon.

In response to a call to serve ILEP's mission development in the Amazon region of Peru, Rev. Bergbusch moved to Iquitos from Lima in early February 2004. After a six month trial period, ELCIC Mission in the World and ILEP agreed that Rev. Bergbusch should continue this ministry at two sites; in Iquitos with the Fiel es Dios (God is Faithful) community and in the rural area of Triunfo.

Born in Edmonton, AB, following high school Rev. Bergbusch earned her Teaching Certificate at Victoria College, and her BA at the University of Victoria. After graduation, she taught English as a second language in Ghana for three years and then returned to Canada to teach in Colwood, BC. Moving to Manitoba, she worked in the Confluent Education Program in northern and rural areas of the province, earned her Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Manitoba and served as Resource Teacher in Selkirk and Winnipeg.

After over a decade of teaching, Rev. Bergbusch began theological studies and graduated in 1983 with a MDiv from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon. Following ordination she served as pastor at Riverton-Hnausa Lutheran Church in Riverton, MB, and Zion Lutheran in Thunder Bay, ON.

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