



**SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA
SYNOD** EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA

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RESOURCE MINISTRY

Dear Friends,

In Western Pennsylvania, we understand the power of water, for both good and bad. The Pittsburgh Flood of 1936 and the Johnstown Flood are part of our history. Each summer, there are warnings of storms and flash floods, which can ruin basements, roads, and businesses. But we also know the spring rains which turn our countryside bright green, with growing trees, fields, and farms.

Sisters and brothers in our companion synod in Madagascar also know the power of water as they have been living through a severe drought.

For years, we have been in relationship with the Tulear Synod (also known in the Malagasy language as Toliara.) We grieve to hear from their leaders about the ongoing drought and consequent famine, as well as the Covid pandemic, which is causing such hardship for the members of the synod. We also learned from a recent email about a May 28th fire at a synod social ministry organization that destroyed a number of buildings. “We really pray to God to give us strength and wisdom. You cannot imagine how many requests [for help] we received these last two weeks,” they wrote.

This is why our synod is raising relief funds for our companions in Tulear. Monies will be sent to the synod under the leadership of Pastor Razafimahatratra Angelos Modeste, President (Bishop) to distribute the funds to those who are most in need, as well as to the Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary (STPL) in Bezaha.

Though southwest Madagascar is dry, a cyclone had severely damaged the seminary’s irrigation system, impacting their ability to grow rice: the staple in their diet. The seminary educates pastors and church leaders for several Lutheran synods; the lack of rice-farming has caused a food shortage for the 58 students. Traditionally, the seminarians farm while attending classes to support themselves and their families. Remediating the situation requires restoring 2 hectares of rice land (about 5 acres), and purchasing four oxen, two oxcarts, two plows, two harrows, and other farm implements.

Visitors from our synod have travelled to Madagascar—most recently in 2014 and 2017—continuing our long-standing connection with both Tulear Synod leaders and the Seminary in Bezaha. The visitors have always been graciously welcomed and treated as honored guests at church functions. Though our languages and cultures may differ, we are truly one in Jesus Christ.

Our siblings in Madagascar need our help. Bishop Kusserow and our synod council are asking you to join our efforts to support our companion synod. The synod has already sent \$5,000 from synod funds to respond as quickly as possible to the pressing needs of both the Tulear Synod and the Seminary in Bezaha. We are asking your support for this appeal. The synod will match individual and congregation gifts up to another \$5,000. In the process, we hope to strengthen personal relationships between our synod and our sisters and brothers in Madagascar.

Your financial support of this appeal, in any amount, will truly assist the Tulear Synod and the Seminary in Bezaha. Contributions can be made on our website at www.swpasynod.org/madagascar or mailed to the Synod Office at:

Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
(Attn: Madagascar)
1014 Perry Hwy, Suite 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Checks should be made out to “SWPA Synod”

With you in Christ,



Bishop Kurt F. Kusserow



Barbara Nugent, Synod Vice President