



Young Adult in Global Mission: A Year in Senegal

Asalaa maalekum. May God's peace be upon you.

My name is Quentin Bernhard. I recently served with the ELCA program Young Adults in Global Mission—YAGM—in Senegal. My time with YAGM came to an end in July, and Senegal country cohort peers and I returned to the United States. We are among the 23 young adults from the 2022-2023 year who served in accompaniment in four different country programs.

I live in New Tripoli in Lehigh County, and I'm a member of New Life Lutheran Church in New Tripoli. Many individuals and congregations from our synod supported me in my YAGM year. Thank you for your support of my time in Senegal and for the opportunity to be in continuing relationship after my time abroad.

My coming to the United States, to the communities I grew up in in Pennsylvania, was also my leaving a community I grew in—a community I grew in as a Lutheran and as a young person, one I have good friends in. I lived in Yeumbeul Bene Baraque, in western Senegal, for ten months. I lived with a host family in a community. I saw friends every day, many when at my placement site. Connected with our partner organization Senegalese Lutheran Development Services—SLDS—I worked in a community center that serves the community in numerous ways, splitting my time between the library and the mutual fund credit union.

My friends and family in Senegal continue to send me voice messages, reminding me that I am also Maguette Ndiaye, my Senegalese name, and reminding me that we are still connected, even if connected in a different way now. Our relationships and our future—all of our future—is unknown to us. Our faith—and our trust in one another—can allow us to take steps and leaps in that future.

Quentin Bernhard

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God of Goodness, We give you praise for the ordinariness of Christmas - that the day comes the same as any other day. We give you praise that there is no sign in the heavens, and no bright star but the light of your presence in the ordinary birth of the child. We give you praise that unobtrusively you are in the center of human affairs, involved in the struggle of life, and sharing human experience.

We give you praise that out of compassion you take our part, and open to us a new way of life. We pray that this day we shall be able to see its true glory."

— Caryl Micklem

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