

## The Vashandiri View

It was my honor and privilege to accompany Bishop Jerge and twelve other pilgrims from the Upstate New York Synod on a Summer 2010 mission and ministry trip to Zimbabwe and Zambia in Africa.

The Vashandiri women's group with their purple uniforms and strong voices were visible throughout our journeys to the Zimbabwe churches and the Revival we all participated in. The backbone of the



Dancing in the Spirit!

ELCZ, the women's group, was an inspiration to me during my stay at the Rengwe Parish in rural central Zimbabwe. Rengwe Parish is the twin parish of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scotia (my home church) and we have supported mission and ministry there for 15 years. Visiting this Parish with its six congregations was the highlight of my personal journey and while I was there I was received as an honorary member of the Vashandiri of the Lutheran Church of Zimbabwe. They asked me to bring their stories home to you which, since returning home, it has been my joy to share with the Women of the ELCA and Lutheran churches in the Upstate New York Synod.

The meaning of the word Zimbabwe is "house of stones." The people of Zimbabwe reflect the resilience and strength of this metaphor. The women of the church are proud, strong examples of Christ's spirit at work in the ELCZ. Their strong lay leadership in the rural areas is impressive. They are well organized and hold their own gatherings each year. They ask for our prayers as



Our Good Sisters in Christ

*Please keep the Vashandiri in your prayers. Their lives are hard and their faith is great.*

they continue to grow the Lutheran Church in their country, work in their churches, with their Sunday school children, sing in the choirs, preach at the pulpits, work in the hospitals, schools, homes and fields of their communities. They demonstrated true fruits of the spirit as they showed me love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness and self-control in all of our times together.

The Upstate New York Synod Women of the ELCA has set aside 10% of all scholarship funds received and placed it in a special fund for the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zimbabwe. As a new Board Member, I pledge to work with the Bishop, the Global Mission Team, and the Vashandiri to help us utilize these funds to the highest good for the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe. More to come in the new year...

Blessings and Peace,  
Mary Rainey