

"Partnership in the Gospel"
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"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you... because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now." (Phil 1:3, 5)

One of the great joys in ministry is working together with other people to share the gospel, often in unexpected ways.

Our congregation recently hosted missionary Pastor Jacob Gaugert to preach and present on his work of training Lutheran pastors in Togo, West Africa. Following the presentation, he gave our congregation the gift of an African fabric with the Luther Rose dyed in its center.

To prepare this cloth for display, I took it to our dry cleaner to have it pressed (the long trip from Africa had left a few creases). When I brought it in, she immediately remarked on the brilliant colors and the beautiful design. Making the most of the opportunity, I took a moment to explain the rose to her.

I spoke of the black cross that shows our sin, which was borne by Christ on the cross, the reason for His death. The red heart reminds us of God's love for us, and our love for one another. The white rose is for the purity and holiness we have through the death of Christ, and blue sky is for our hope of heaven. The golden ring shows the precious gift of eternal life.

I have known my dry cleaner for years, and she knows that I'm a pastor, but this was the first time that I actually shared the gospel with her in such an explicit way, and she was happy to listen.

As I reflect on this, I am simply amazed by the partnership that created this opportunity, from Luther, to Africa, to Oak Lawn, Illinois, and how, together, God can use us to spread His good news.