

First woman ordained in Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi

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(Photo courtesy of the Lutheran World Federation)

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On September 26, Bertha Godfrey Munkhondya became the first woman ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi.

In a congratulatory letter to Munkhondya and the ELCM, Lutheran World Federation general secretary Martin Junge expressed gratitude for Munkhondya's willingness to serve the church.

"May Munkhondya's ordination inspire girls and women to pursue theological education and respond to the call to ministry. Gender justice in the church and society is our shared commitment and our witness to the world," he wrote.

Munkhondya, originally from Chisenga, Chitipa, Malawi, studied theology at the Tumaini University Makumira in Arusha, Tanzania, and will serve as associate pastor of the ELCM cathedral in Lilongwe.

Bishop Joseph P. Bvumbwe presided at the ordination. Participants in the event included delegations from the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

“The ELCM took time before it ordained a female pastor, but there is full acceptance of Rev. Munkhondya,” Bvumbwe said. “We ask for your prayers for our church and encourage churches that are still meditating or discerning the process of ordaining female pastors.”

The ELCM has been an LWF member church since 1988 and has 111,000 members.
—Lutheran World Federation