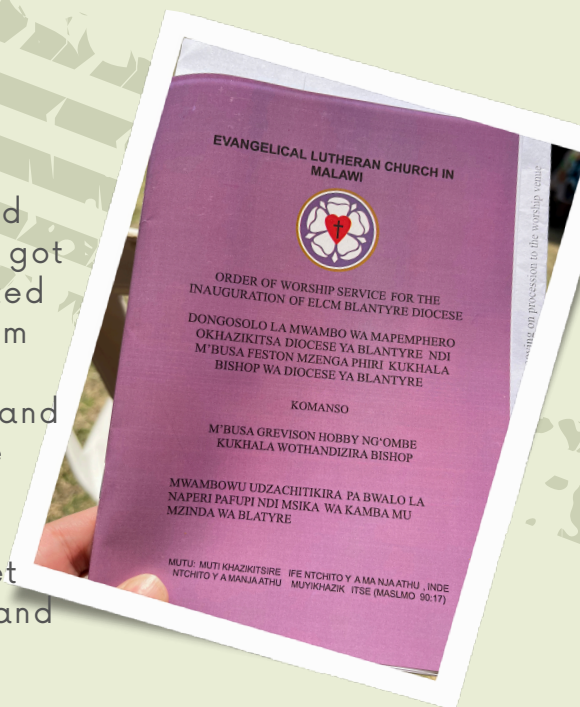


# BISHOP MARTIN'S Malawi Reflections.

Week 1. 2

On Saturday, we celebrated the 42nd anniversary of the ELCM. Let's just say that the 20 minute service I explained above was more of the exception than the rule! After traveling to the southern diocese of Blantyre, I had my first outdoor worship service here. By our estimation, Laura and I both feel that there were well over a thousand people in attendance under a total of seven tents (8 including the bishop tent) for this grand celebration. Each deanery (think conference) filled a tent, verbally whooped it up when they saw or heard something that moved them, and let the Spirit soar throughout the day. The festivities included a history of the ELCM, several amazing choirs singing to recorded music (both youth and adult), and an abundance of dancers that simply stole the show (outside of this old man that tried to keep up with four of the most energetic adolescent dancers I've ever seen! You can see for yourself here: [Laura, insert link here](#))! Laura and I got to offer our greetings on behalf of the NWSWI in addition to several other visiting dignitaries and bishops from neighboring countries as well as places like Sweden! Each greeting was translated live for those in attendance. After about 3 and half hours and 94 degree temps, it was definitely time to get a meal and a LOT of water! But wait, there's more... After supper, we attended another worship service in the church on site. We were told that this would be a pretty short one. As usual, we bishops got front row seating inside while much of the crowd was seated outside, but could hear everything through the sound system and open windows. Bishop Bvumbe led worship, bouncing back and forth between their native tongue of Chichewa and English for our benefit. Several women of the church came around and poured water over our hands into a bowl just before communion as they knelt on their knees. It was so humbling as I reflected on Jesus washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. Well, when everything was said, sung, and done, this shorter worship lasted a bit over an hour!



I will leave a brief teaser here and let you know that my next post will be about the new bishop's installation service we experienced today. Any guesses on the over/under for the length of the service?