

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

Hebrews 13:16

Shared Encounters



ELEAZAR
FERNANDEZ

Displaced from their ancestral homes because of mining, militarization, and other forms of developmental aggression, the Lumads (indigenous people of the Philippines) have sought temporary sanctuary among hospitable communities. Global Ministries partner, Union Theological Seminary (UTS) has been privileged to host the Lumads. The Lumads stayed for a month at the UTS campus, which felt like home because of its beautiful natural surroundings. Through UTS’ hospitality, the Lumad children were able to continue their education through the traveling Bakwit (evacuees) School, which provides schooling to the many Lumads who evacuated.

To the surprise of the seminary hosts, the Lumads/strangers became their teachers. In the encounter, the seminary community experienced revelation and transformation.

Seeking to be faithful, as Jesus did, to prophetic boldness and compassionate witness, members of the UTS community, particularly seminarians, have now organized a regular Sunday Worship with a farmers’ group that is occupying the nearby agricultural land. The Sunday Worship has been going on for some months now, with students coming home from the day’s activity with unspeakable joy, a better understanding of God, and a stronger commitment to the least.

Eleazar Fernandez serves with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. His appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Church’s Wider Mission, WOC, OGHS, and your special gifts.

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