

# Overview of Visit to Chile

## January 2006

In January 2006, Kate Lawler, ELCA Global Mission Regional Representative for South America, traveled to Chile for the opening of a new health center in Concepción, Chile by the health organization, EPES (Popular Education in Health). EPES was founded by ELCA missionary Karen Anderson in 1982 during the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. Since then, Karen has served as the bridge between EPES and U.S. congregations and communities that have become deeply involved in supporting EPES' work. ELCA Global Mission continues to be a strong supporter of EPES' work.

During her January 2006 visit, Kate Lawler was able to join a U.S. delegation that had come for the opening of the new EPES center in Concepción. Two ELCA congregations that have supported EPES' work for many years, Trinity Lutheran Church from Owatonna, MN and Prince of Peace from Clifton Park, NY were represented in the delegation. The delegation had the opportunity to visit several teams of EPES health workers as well as sites related to the human rights and social justice issues that are central to the work of EPES and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) such as a former torture center, a day care center in a shantytown, and a former mining community on the Chilean coast.



Rev. Oscar Sanhueza, General Secretary of the IELCH, Rev. Gloria Rojas, President of the IELCH and Kate Lawler at the opening of the EPES Center in Concepción.



EPES trains teams of health workers such as this one to look for the root causes of health and social problems in their com-



The streets of Chile were filled with campaign posters. If elected in the runoff election on January 15, Michelle Bachelet would be the first woman president of Chile.



Campamento Peñalolén, a shantytown in Santiago where EPES and the IELCH work together to promote health and human dignity.