**Liberia Education Update**

**May 2019**

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**Lofa River District**

I ended April and began May in the Lofa River District. District Superintendent, Rev. Cecelia Marpleh, and I traveled together in her pick-up truck from Gbarnga in Bong County to visit the Jemima Camp Freeman United Methodist School (UMS) in Voinjama City, Lofa County. I visited Voinjama several times since 2009 as we worked to renovate and reopen the school that was damaged and looted during the war. The school now has 115 students in nursery class through seventh grade. Water for Life built a latrine for the school with a gift from St. Paul's UMC in Rochester, Michigan.

There are 5 students in the 7th grade class and only one of them had a copy of the literature book, *Why No One Knows When He Will Die*. The need for required textbooks continues in schools throughout Liberia. While in Lofa, we also visited the recently established Foya United Methodist Church (UMC). The congregation speaks the Kisi language, but there was only a copy of the English King James Bible in the church. I was so happy to find a Kisi Bible at the Bible Society book store in Monrovia. I would like everyone to hear and receive the Word in the language they understand best. Back in Monrovia, I also found a copy of the literature book for each student in the 7th grade class.

**Travel to Southeast**

The road to Sinoe County is even more challenging than the road to Voinjama because a bridge is down. So, I went by Cessna to visit the students and staff at the Harrison Grigsby UMS in Greenville, Sinoe County.

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**Give to Advance projects**

#15125B Scholarships
#3020670 Construction of New School Buildings
#3021654 Sheltering the Children of Gretta Moffat United Methodist School

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*Students at morning devotion before starting classes at Jemima Camp Freeman UMS in Voinjama City, May 1, 2019.*
Children in class at Harrison Grigsby UMS in Greenville, Sinoe County, May 17, 2019. Children in the elementary classes use reading textbooks.

One of our Operation Classroom scholarship students in 11th grade met me at the Greenville airport on Rev. Snoh Myers’ motorbike. Rev. Myers is the Sinoe District Superintendent and principal of Harrison Grigsby UMS. I spent time in each class and met with students who have scholarships through Operation Classroom and the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. The 9th grade class was studying citizenship and the teacher arranged for them to have a field trip to Greenville’s Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. The students were learning the meaning of naturalization. It just happens that my mother immigrated to Liberia from Jamaica and naturalized as a Liberian citizen. I was able to tell her story and clear up the misunderstanding that if you are born in Liberia you are naturally a Liberian citizen- you are naturalized. I’m thankful for the timing of my visit.

**Flight to Zwedru**

Now that I’m an experienced Cessna passenger, I flew over the muddy roads to Zwedru in Grand Gedeh County. Zwedu is in a district of the Liberia Annual Conference that includes Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties. At our Annual Conference held in February this year, it was decided to change the name of Grand Gedeh District to Gee River District.

This was my first visit to Zwedru UMS since it added high school classes in September 2015. While Zwedru UMS needs textbooks and no student receives a scholarship (This is the same for Jemima Camp Freeman UMS.), there have been many improvements at the school since my last visit. UNICEF is putting 2 toilets in the building. There are small chairs and a small table for the nursery class. The chalk boards were changed. The hand pump is working. The staff was united as a team in their school shirts and my welcome was great.

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I wish you the love, joy, and peace of Jesus Christ.
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