

# Liberia Education Update

May 2020



COVID-19 signs are all over Monrovia. This one is at the corner of my street in Sinkor, Monrovia.

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Liberia Annual Conference is distributing buckets and barrels to hold water for handwashing.



## Give to Advance Projects

Construction of New School Buildings  
#3020670

Missionary Support #3021129

Operation Classroom # 3020494

Scholarships #15125B

## The State of Emergency

The restrictions that began in Liberia on April 11 are slowly easing. Every other Friday, President George Weah gives an update on the 60-day State of Emergency. People are still wearing masks in public, washing hands, and having temperatures taken before entering businesses, but in May, people were also moving about and anxious for churches to open. The President announced that Mosques could open on May 15 and churches on May 17. On May 22, the curfew was changed from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Schools remain closed.

We ended May with 288 recorded cases of COVID-19 of which 157 persons recovered and 27 persons died. The emotional and economic impact of COVID-19 continues and I pray for the end, not only in Liberia, but also in other parts of the world. I continue to pray for those sheltering in place with isolation and for peace and justice for those filled with anger caused by injustice. Liberia went through a long period of civil unrest and the Ebola crisis. Now we are watching and praying for other nations.

This virus and the spread of protests show how connected we all are. It is as if every nation is in a State of Emergency with persons grieving all over the earth. What one person does affects others throughout the world. It makes me think of how Jesus' message spread; and I ask myself, "What I am spreading?"

## Discussions on Reopening Schools

The Ministry of Education began weekly Zoom meetings on May 21 to bring partners and stakeholders together to discuss teaching by radio, how to safely reopen schools, and how to determine students' promotion to the next grade. The government wants classes to begin as soon as the Ministry of Health gives the approval. Schools will use an accelerated curriculum and focus on the core subjects. The school week will include Saturdays (or Sundays for the Seventh Day Adventist schools). When schools open, our United Methodist schools will have Bible class in addition to the core subjects of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

## School Construction Work in Korsen

In my January 2020 update, I shared about the school construction in Korsen, Nimba County funded by gifts from Peoria First United Methodist Church in Illinois. The work is continuing, and we hope that when schools open, the students will be able to learn in the new



Korsen UMS in Nimba County is at roof level. *Photo from Rev. Aaron Yankee, District Superintendent, Gompa District.*

Korsen United Methodist School (UMS) building. Korsen is in the Gompa District of the Liberia Annual Conference. The Gompa District Superintendent, Rev. Aaron Yankee, visited Korsen in May and sent photos of the progress. I appreciate being able to communicate with district superintendents and principals via phone and email, especially while travel between counties is restricted during the State of Emergency.

### **Caring for the Community in Gboko Town**

For several years, Rev. Jacob Nathan, pastor of the Zacchaeus Garjay United Methodist Church and principal of Zacchaeus Garjay UMS in Gboko Town, Grand Bassa County, has organized annual local youth camps. Central Church in Oslo, Norway has a longstanding friendship with the church and school and sent \$2,000.00 for the 2020 Easter Camp. But the camp was cancelled due to COVID-19, so Rev. Nathan asked if the money could be used to support the families of the church, school, and community with rice, vegetable oil, bleach, and soap for bathing and cleaning. Instead of organizing an Easter Camp in April, he organized a rice and cleaning materials distribution in May. Rev. Nathan reported that the supplies were given to 205 persons to share with their families. The distribution reached over 1000 persons through 147 students representing 49 families, 11 school administrative and support staff, 33 church members who do not have students in the school, 7 senior adults (including 2 sick and shut-in pastors), 6 camp workers and the District Superintendent, Rev. Hezekiah Franklin. Thank you to Central Church and Rev. Nathan for making this outreach possible.



Rice and cleaning supplies for the May distribution at Zacchaeus Garjay UMS. *Photo from Rev. Jacob Nathan.*

“You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,  
To the end that my glory may sing praise to you and not be silent.  
Oh Lord, my God, I will give thanks to you forever.”  
Psalm 30: 11-12 (NKJV)

Remember that God is still God and trust in the promises of His Word.

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Rice delivered to Zacchaeus Garjay UMS, May 2020. *Photo from Rev. Jacob Nathan.*