

Liberia Education Update

November 2023



Rev. Brownell Konton and Helen Roberts-Evans in canoe leaving Greenville, Sinoe County to go to Betu, Grand Kru County. Nov. 16, 2023



Presidential run-off election ballot poster, Greenville, Sinoe County. Nov. 29, 2023



St. John Catholic Church, Betu, Grand Kru County, venue for the 2nd Nana Kru District Meeting held November 16-19, 2023. Nov. 18, 2023



Rev. Tiawroh at J. S. Nagbe UMC in Betu. The church has 1,600 concrete blocks for a new building. Nov. 19, 2023

Run-off Election

In Liberia, the president needs to win by 50% of the votes plus at least one vote. With 20 candidates, no one won the presidential election in October. Schools were again closed (this time for 3 days) for the run-off election on November 14. Harrison W. Grigsby United Methodist School (UMS) was again a polling site. The two candidates with the highest number of votes, President George Weah and former Vice President Joseph Boakai were in the run-off election. In the first round, President George Weah had a narrow lead, but Joseph Boakai narrowly won the run-off election. The inauguration will be on January 22, 2024.

Travels in Nana Kru District

Once the elections were over, my travels in southeast Liberia resumed. There are 19 towns along the coast between Seebeh, the town next to Greenville in Sinoe County and Sass Town in Grand Kru County. None of these towns has a high school. On November 16, 2023, Nana Kru District Superintendent of The United Methodist Church (UMC), Rev. Brownell Konton, and I set out by canoe from Greenville at 7:11 am for Betu, the town before Sass Town. The purpose for our trip was to participate in four events. We stopped in King William's Town (the last town in Sinoe County) to sympathize with the family of the late Pastor James Nyepan. James Nyepan was the person I knew best in King William's Town. Before pastoring, he served as the lay servant for Mary Allen UMC. He was also a volunteer teacher in the Mary Allen School and the Township Commissioner. We reached shore in Betu at about 10:30 pm for the Second District Meeting of the Nana Kru District Conference. I spoke on *The Role of a Church Leader*. After the District Meeting, I joined members of the Nana Kru District on a morning walk from Betu to the next town, Nifu, for the wedding of Rev. Moses Jarbo and Pastor Olivia Wortee.



Members of Nana Kru District waiting for canoe to cross the river from Nifu to Botra, Grand Kru County. Nov. 21, 2023



Getting in a canoe to cross the river from Betu to Nifu, Grand Kru. Nov. 20, 2023.



Rev. Brownell Konton breaking ground for Nana Kru District high school in King William's Town. Nov. 22, 2023

We walked for almost one hour to a river and waited for the canoe to go back and forth to carry all of us across. Then we walked another hour (in the sand) to Nifu. We bathed, ate, dressed up, and waited for the ringing of the church bell to call us for the wedding. Rev. Konton was the officiating clergy. After the marriage ceremony, was the wedding feast. People ate and danced until 3:00 am. But not me, I went to sleep much earlier knowing that we had another walk and canoe ride in the morning. We continued the walk along the beach to the next town, Botra. There I visited the family of Rev. Francis Nyeswa. Rev. Nyeswa is a pastor and the Administrative Assistant to Rev. Konton. We meet at all the Nana Kru District gatherings. Normally, he walks hours to the towns along the coast and to the inland towns in the district. But on this day, he went by canoe with me from Botra past six towns to King William's town so I would have company. The rest of the group continued for another five hours walking to King William's Town. At night, we joined James Nyeapan's family and the Mary Allen UMC for the all-night wake. The next morning before the funeral, Rev. Konton led the groundbreaking ceremony for the Nana Kru District high school. On this trip I went down and back up the coast past the towns with no high schools- nine towns in Grand Kru down the coast from King William's Town and nine towns in Sinoe up the coast from King William's Town. I share Rev. Konton's dream of having a high school for the students along and near the coast of Grand Kru and Sinoe.

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Rev. Francis Nyeswa, a former student of the Mary Allen (elementary and junior high) UMS in King William's Town, at the groundbreaking for the high school. As a child, he left Botra, which has an elementary school, to attend junior high school at Mary Allen UMS. Nov. 22, 2023