

SIERRA LEONE NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012

The Initiative has not only given the church the ability to support full-time pastors, but from that strength to expand the presence of the church into previously unreached areas. In the small rural border town of Gendema (so small that it doesn't even exist on maps), we visited a new church start (a mission). There had never before been a Christian presence in this area. It was a completely Muslim community.



In the last year the Annual Conference established a church and the first grade of a secondary school. There is no other secondary school in this area, and so the United Methodist Church is able to invite people to know Christ as they provide for an educational need in the community. After the war the United Methodist Church had a presence in 8 of the 12 districts of the country. In the last 3 years the church has been able to extend their reach and influence to every district in the country. This would never have been possible without the pastoral support of the Initiative.

As I return from Sierra Leone I am excited about having met our partner church and I am hopeful that over the next several years, through more visits, we will be able to develop a life-giving partnership with them. One of the things that I came away with, though, is that even if nothing comes of the relationship with our partner church, our participation in the Initiative to support the salaries of pastors is more than worth our support. In fact, I can say that it is one of the line items on our missions giving budget that is most clearly fulfilling our mission to make more disciples and transform the world in partnership with the church of Sierra Leone. Never again will I have the question 'is our commitment to the Initiative making a difference?'

"Even if nothing comes of the relationship with our partner church, our participation in the Initiative to support the salaries of pastors is more than worth our support."

Submitted by Rev. Jake Waybright, Middlesex UMC

Following Rev. Waybright's presentation on his return someone said, "We have to do something for the church and the school there" The repair of a well was the first thing that grabbed people's hearts, with a decision to do a special offering throughout the Sunday's in Lent with the goal of getting the well working for the school and doing necessary security improvements for the parsonage so that Rev. Kamara would feel safe in her home. With a worshipping congregation of 150 they collected over \$2800 the first Sunday! Praise God!

From the United States Department of State African Affairs, January 12, 2012 report:

Area: 71,740 sq. km. (29,925 sq. mi.); slightly smaller than South Carolina. Capital--Freetown
Population (2010): 5.848 million. **Health:** Life expectancy at birth (2010)--48 years
Natural resources: Diamonds, titanium ore (rutile), bauxite, gold, iron ore, ilmenorutile, platinum, chromite, manganese, cassiterite, molybdenite, as well as forests, abundant fresh water, and rich offshore fishing grounds.
Trade (2010): Exports--\$341.2 million: diamonds, rutile, bauxite, coffee, cocoa, fish.
People: The population includes 20 African ethnic groups. The Temne in the north and the Mende in the south are the largest. About 2% of the population are Krio, the descendants of freed slaves who returned to Sierra Leone from Great Britain and North America and from slave ships captured on the high seas. In addition, about 4,000 Lebanese, 500 Indians, and 2,000 Europeans reside in the country.
In 2010, the United States exported almost \$56.5 million of goods (transportation equipment, agricultural products, machinery, chemicals) to Sierra Leone and imported over \$29 million in goods (minerals, metals, machinery, agricultural products).
In fiscal year 2011, total U.S. bilateral aid to Sierra Leone in all categories was \$19.4 million. U.S. assistance focused on the consolidation of peace, democracy and human rights, health education, particularly combating HIV/AIDS, and human resources development. The United States is the largest single donor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

This was my first trip to Sierra Leone. Our church has been part of the Sierra Leone Initiative since 2007. Sitting in mission's team meetings, we often asked the question, 'Is our commitment to the Initiative making a difference?'. For a smaller sized church the \$1200/year is not an insignificant commitment. It had been difficult to establish communication with our partner church, and we just weren't sure what to do. We decided that I needed to go to understand what it was all about. What I found in Sierra Leone convinced me that this initiative is making an incredible impact for the church in Sierra Leone and for the country as a whole.



Bishop John Yambasu of the Sierra Leone Annual Conference sat down to share his perspective. He said that never in his work in the United Methodist Church had he seen a partnership between Conferences that had such a transformational impact. Because the people of Sierra Leone have so little, as they work to rebuild their lives, their economy, and their country from the devastating impact of the civil war, the people of the church's did not have enough income to pay their pastors. In particular this had an impact on the rural areas of the country. Pastors refused to serve churches outside of the large cities in the country where the people could provide a meager salary. They knew that if they went to lead a church in the rural areas that they would, in effect, be taking an assignment where they would have to see their family go hungry on a regular basis and be unable to pay for their children's education.

"This initiative is making an incredible impact."



Bishop Yambasu shared that the initiative has completely changed this. He is now able to send pastors to any part of the country because he can guarantee that they will at least have a salary that allows their families to eat each day.

Other people who I asked about the impact of the initiative gave very similar answers. A District Superintendent, Rev. Mariame Bockarie, remarked that what she saw was a marked difference in the physical, emotional, and spiritual vigor of the pastors. Before the initiative she shared that the pastors very often looked beat-down and undernourished. Now they have more energy, life, and stamina to lead their families, their churches, and their communities. I was humbled by pastors who only ask that they have enough to feed and educate their families in order to serve the gospel.

One of the more dynamic pastors we met in our travels was a District Superintendent in a southern district. He has a University degree in agriculture and in theology, and had been working for the government's department of agriculture at a salary of \$400/month. The Bishop came and asked him to serve in full-time ministry and he answered the call. This meant for him that he had to take a salary reduction to \$100/month. This is a huge pay cut, and he was doing it for the sake of the Gospel. What I realized as we talked is that, without the support of the initiative, he would probably have only been able to receive an income of about \$50/month, the cost of a bag of rice. Here was a gifted pastoral leader who was willing to follow the call at great personal sacrifice, but without the initiative, the cost may have been too great.

I have to admit that I had always been a skeptic when it came to the church. I grew up attending Sunday school for a while and always believed in God but never really “bought in” to the institution of the church. Even more difficult to admit is the fact that I never before saw the advantage of missionaries.

During my very first (but definitely not last) mission trip to Sierra Leone (January 21-February 3, 2012) in the midst of one of the poorest countries in the world I saw so many beautiful people with open hearts and loving eyes. Those images will stay with me forever. I believe that they will, quite literally, be the catalyst for the change in my life. But, through all the memories, the one that changed me as a person was one moment in the village of Gendema.



Students collecting water at school

I was blessed enough to attend a ceremony of sorts with some very prominent leaders in Gendema; a small village on the Liberian border. There were so many speakers that day that I do not even know for certain who said it; but someone was speaking about Bishop John. They were explaining that for the last couple years they have heard Bishop John speak of the “Initiative” and the wonderful things that the United Methodist church was doing for their country. The tone of his words was one that was all too familiar to me...skeptical. As he continued to speak I could actually FEEL his voice change and I just knew that, at any moment, something big was going to happen. He went on to express how grateful they were to have us there and how excited they are to have a sister church willing to send a missionary to help them continue to build a life with God. By now all of the skepticism was gone and he was simply humbled by the fact

that we had made the journey to their village, which was not an easy place to get to. They had finally seen what Bishop John was saying. He ended this speech with 3 words...NOW WE BELIEVE. That day, in that place with those people those 3 words changed me forever. It took everything in my power to not stand up and scream... SO DO I.

*Submitted by Tiffany Holland,
First UMC Mechanicsburg*



↑ Tiffany & Pastor Kylie
Calvary UMC, Taiama

↓ UMC School



The burden of poverty isn't just that you don't always have the things you need, it's the feeling of being embarrassed every day of your life, and you'd do anything to lift that burden.

Jay Z.

The poverty of our century is unlike that of any other. It is not, as poverty was before, the result of natural scarcity, but of a set of priorities imposed upon the rest of the world by the rich.

John Berger

Shipping Guidelines

- Do Not** send packages directly to your partner church – send them through the Sierra Leone Initiative whenever it has funds to ship a container
- When shipping boxes, usually done from Mission Central, please include shipping funds; it costs \$8,000 to \$9,000 to ship a 40 foot container. Boxes go to Mission Central. Send shipping funds to the Conference Office labeled SLI-Adv. Sp. 63643–shipping.
- Label** boxes on all 4 sides with the name of your partner church and Sierra Leone Initiative. Attach a list of contents. Pack boxes solidly for stacking on pallets.
- Do Not** label boxes/packages to individuals; this creates problems and fines at the customs/dock, possibly endangering the entire container in Sierra Leone!

Join a Mission Team to Sierra Leone

Your trip fee includes all airfares, lodging, meals, and travel in Sierra Leone. You are responsible for meals while in travel to and from Sierra Leone, for any extra food or beverage you may desire during the mission, and for funds for personal gifts.

**Send your deposit to:
Calvary U.M. Church
4700 Locust Lane
Harrisburg, PA 17109
(717) 545-0021**

**Email: jfisher@susumc.org
Checks made payable: Calvary UMC**

Students must be at least 16 years of age. Please consider your own health limitations to travel to Sierra Leone. Health care as we know it in the USA is non-existent. We live in reasonable comfort but the heat, humidity and constant travel can be exhausting. If you have questions, please call.

- Secure your passport as soon as possible.
- Visit your family doctor and health clinic to begin medical preparations.

***Note: Application does not guarantee participation on a specific team.**

UPCOMING TEAMS

Approximate dates

Sun., Jan. 13 - Sat., Jan. 26, 2013

Total cost: \$4,000

June 1, 2012	\$1,000
July 1, 2012	\$1,000
August 1, 2012	\$1,000
September 1, 2012	\$1,000

Initial team meeting we be held on Sun., July 15th at 2:00 p.m. @ Calvary UMC, Harrisburg. Contact Jeff Fisher for more information.



Dedication service for the first Christian Congregation in Moforay Village. Funds provided through Arms Around Africa, organized through Bethany UMC, Red Lion.



Hunger, a Cause of Poverty

By causing poor health, low levels of energy, and even mental impairment, hunger can lead to even greater poverty by reducing people's ability to work and learn, thus leading to even greater hunger.



Pa Lokko UMC
Waterloo

PARTNER CONGREGATIONS

Photos provided are of some congregations that have been visited in the past few years by Sierra Leone Initiative Team members.



Rogers Memorial
UMC, BO



Martyr's Memorial,
Rotifunk
Zion UMC, York



Tombodu UMC
Paxtonville, UMC



Leader Memorial
UMC, BO
Otterbein, Boiling Springs



Yengema UMC
Linglestown Life



Yoyema UMC
Todd Kraut St. Paul's Chapel,
Red Lion



Bell Memorial,
Mokonde/Njala
Calvary, Harrisburg



Heine Memorial UMC, BO



Kono UMC



Crosspoint team, Pastor
Michael Kammara and
UMC Primary School
Head Mistress Sarah
Kammara

The Team, consisting of Sara Herrick, Pastor Dave Biser, Ken Mengel and I left on Sunday, January 22 for Sierra Leone and returned to Harrisburg on Friday, February 3.

It turns out it wasn't easy getting to Sierra Leone. For a variety of reasons, our flight from Dulles Airport was delayed for seven hours, so we missed our connecting flight in Brussels to Sierra Leone.

In order to get the next plane to Sierra Leone, we had to spend two extra nights in Brussels, then fly to London and catch a flight from there to Sierra Leone. While spending time in Brussels is not a bad thing in itself, we feared losing two days off our trip would severely hamper our schedule.

After landing at Lungi airport in Sierra Leone, we were able to make our way by ferry to Freetown, the capital city, where we spent our first night. From there, we traveled to the city of Makeni, a provincial capital, where we would stay at the M-J Motel. The village of Mableh, where our sister church is located, is about seven miles from Makeni.

Despite having two less days to work with, with God's help, the Mission Team was able to accomplish the vast majority of what it set out to do.

Much of the Team's efforts were focused on preparing for the construction of a new church in Mableh. Meetings were held with the UMC District Superintendent, the District Lay Leader/Village Elder and the Region's Paramount Chief to inform them of our plans. Additionally, we had an opportunity to meet briefly with the UMC Bishop in Freetown. In all these meetings, we received overwhelming support for the new church and many thanks for our efforts in Mableh.



Ground breaking ceremony for new Church



UMC Primary School

Pastor Dave gave the sermon at Sunday's service in Mableh, where the plans for the new church were received with great enthusiasm by the congregation. Additionally, Pastor Dave challenged the congregation to assist with their own time and labor, to which they responded with an overwhelming show of support.

The Mission Team spent the several days either in Makeni or Mableh working on a variety of projects. Among these were:

- Meeting with Primary School Head Mistress and Secondary School Principal to work out plans for providing four annual scholarships to Mableh primary school graduates
- Meeting with church/village elders concerning cassava food processor
- Purchasing a motorcycle for church/primary school usage (will help transport primary school teachers to and from work)
- Purchasing school supplies for Mableh primary school
- Delivering medical supplies from US to Mableh clinic
- Buying blood pressure cuff and stethoscope for clinic
- Buying battery powered lanterns for church
- Buying and distributing children's underwear to village



First four recipients of
Secondary School
Scholarships

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Sponsor a covenant to provide Pastor Salary support. \$100 per month.
- Have your youth, UMW or UMM, or SS classes unite to provide Pastor Salary support.
- Collect needed supplies and funds to ship them.
- Have a fund raiser to raise funds for shipping.
- Make one time donations towards shipping
- Travel with a team to Sierra Leone or send someone from your congregation.
- PRAY

Submitted by Tom Wanich, Crosspoint UMC



Team members at Panguma UMC

Members of Camp Hill UMC were able to visit their sister church in November. The photo below has an interesting story...we are standing in front of the Panguma Secondary School dressed in our "chief's" shirts and hats. These clothing articles were made at the school, using sewing machines we had previously purchased and gave to the school. The clothing was presented to us as a thank you gift, acknowledging the 10 computers and generator we were preparing to install at the school, later that week. After some initial start-up issues, we got 8 out of 10 computers up and running...the looks on the faces of the students to see those machines operating is a sight I will not soon forget...to God be the Glory!

Submitted by Fred Clark, Camp Hill UMC



WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONNECT?

Sierra Leone Initiative

Contact:

Chairperson: Pam Perna,
pperna@verizon.net
2084 Paxtonville Road
Middleburg, PA 17842
(570) 837-5001 home (570) 765-8836 cell

My mission trip was an "experience" that I will never forget! I feel so "connected" with my brothers and sisters there in Sierra Leone that I long to do more to help them. I felt so many emotions during that trip that words really can't describe them all. I was sad for a situation that appeared to need so much help. I was enlightened by the work that has been done by the UMC!



In practically every town along the way, I saw a UMC school and church (even though some were in desperate need of repair). I was inspired by a people whose faith was stronger than anything I have ever experienced before – as their faith seems to be tested every day through hunger, the need for shelter and other basic necessities that we in the western world take for granted ("clean" running water and electricity).

I was anxious to begin work on the African Children's Choir to provide a "hand up" to people who are anxious to succeed. I was moved by the dedication and hard work of the pastors at our sister churches. I felt happy to laugh and joke with my two ambassadors (Syl & Henry) and my Captain Santos! I was ashamed when I thought of all the "waste" I have seen in our country as we throw out more food in one day than the entire country of Sierra Leone probably consumes in a month.

I am convinced that God wants us to help them "no matter what it takes" since Christianity knows "no borders". We are truly a world community and Sierra Leone is just one of our many neighbors who God has instructed us to help. I will be going back in the future (the Lord God willing) to be reunited with my brothers and sisters in Christ. May Godspeed our work . . .

Submitted by Bill Grondin, York, Zion UMC

Think about it: Every educated person is not rich, but almost every educated person has a job and a way out of poverty. So education is a fundamental solution to poverty.

Kathleen Blanco

Historic Ties of the Sierra Leone Initiative

The Sierra Leone Initiative of the Susquehanna Conference is one component of local United Methodist efforts in that country that go back over 150 years. The United Brethren Church was the most active of our predecessor denominations in sending missionaries to and establishing schools and hospitals and churches in Sierra Leone. United Brethren missionaries born and raised within the present Susquehanna Conference and/or sent out by the Pennsylvania Conference of that denomination include the persons listed below. Their home congregations/areas include such places as Boiling Springs, Carlisle, Chambersburg, Elizabethville, Grantville, Greencastle, Lykens, Marion, Mont Alto and Waynesboro. This list may not even be complete, but it indicates a strong and continuing commitment to bringing the message of Christ in word and deed to the people of Sierra Leone.

Service in Sierra Leone	Name	Place of Service
1855	Daniel C. Kumler	Good Hope
1883-1889	James M. Leshner	Freetown
1883-1885	Mrs. James M. Leshner	Freetown
1892-1898	Luther Olin Burtner	Shaingay
1892-1898	Jennie L. Light (Mrs. LOB)	Shaingay
1899-1902	Ira E. Albert	Freetown [namesake of Albert Academy]
1899-1902	Mary Richards (Mrs. IEA)	Freetown
1913-1920	Lena Mae Hoerner	Moyamba
1914-1919	Jessie E. Hoerner	Freetown
1914-1919	Lulu Mae Clippinger	Taiama
1920-1926	William N. Martin	Freetown
1920-1926	Grace Snyder (Mrs. WNM)	Freetown
1931-1964	Dr. Mabel I. Silver	Rotifunk
1936-1958	Earl J. Ensminger	Sherbro
1936-1958	Ruth M. Funk (Mrs. EJE)	Sherbro
1937	Anna Amelia Shafer	Taiama
1956-1962	Mary Alice Lippert	Moyamba
1962-1963	Edna Kline	Sierra Leone
1982-1989	Dorothy Gilbert	Sierra Leone

Communications Reminders

- Sierra Leone has no surface mail delivery system and electricity is sporadic which limits use of email.
- Send all correspondence to SLI chairperson, Beatrice Fofanah (in Sierra Leone) at bfofanah@yahoo.com. She will arrange for your email/letter to be delivered to your partner church.
- Please copy all correspondence you send or receive to Pam Perna, Initiative chair at: pperna@verizon.net.
- Send letters with the delegates that travel to and from Sierra Leone in January and April. Give letters to the delegates if they visit your church or email them to jfisher@susumc.org or mail to Rev. Jeff Fisher, Calvary UMC, 4700 Locust Lane, Harrisburg, PA 17109.

SIERRA LEONE INITIATIVE

Conference Congregations with Covenant Agreements (as of March 2012)
*56 Congregations/Charges and 4 organizations/Sunday School classes/individuals
 are supporting 60 Sister Congregations in Sierra Leone*

Altoona	Cove Forge & Williamsburg	Grafton
Altoona	2nd Avenue Altoona	Kambia
Chambersburg	Barts-Centenary, Littlestown	Lunsar
Chambersburg	McConnellsburg	Bishop Humper, Freetown
Harrisburg	Calvary, Harrisburg	Bell Memorial, Mokonde/Njala
Harrisburg	Centenary, Steelton	Hallowell
Harrisburg	Chambers Hill	Njaagbwema
Harrisburg	Cross Point (2)	Maboleh
Harrisburg	First, Hershey	Moyiba Kissy Brook
Harrisburg	Trinity, Hummelstown	Pujehun Town
Harrisburg	Linglestown Life	Gaston, Yengema
Harrisburg	St. John's Grantville	Kwellu-Buma
Lewisburg	Hummel's	Albert Margai Mem. Gbangbatoke
Lewisburg	Paxtonville	Tombodu
Lewisburg	St. Pauls, Lewisburg	Albert Memorial, Sembahun
Lewisburg	Trinity, Danville	Trinity, Baoma
Lewisburg	Witmers/Port Trevorton	Old Wharf, Wellington
New Cumberland	Aldersgate, Mechanicsburg	Port Loko
New Cumberland	Allison	Mokorewah
New Cumberland	Baughman Memorial	Bradford
New Cumberland	Calvary, Dillsburg	Taba Kowa
New Cumberland	Calvary, Dillsburg, UMW	Taba Kowa
New Cumberland	Camp Hill (2)	Lower Bambara, Panguma
New Cumberland	East Salem, Thompsontown	Bishop Carew, Senehun
New Cumberland	Enola/West Shore Cluster	Warner Memorial, Mano
New Cumberland	First, Mechanicsburg	Calvary, Taiama
New Cumberland	Fishing Creek Salem	Hal-Smith, Jaiama
New Cumberland	Middlesex, Carlisle	St. Matthews, Magburake
New Cumberland	Otterbein, Boiling Springs	Leader Memorial, Bo
New Cumberland	Mt. Olivet	Ngandorhun
New Cumberland	Shepherdstown (3)	Grace, Freetown
New Cumberland	Turkey Valley	St. Mark, Roneitta
State College	Centre Grove Clearfield	Kercher, Kenema
State College	Center Grove Disciples SS	Dodo
State College	Faith, Bellefonte	Mango Brown/Pa Loko Fishery
State College	Runville & Yarnell	Hangha
State College	West side/Clearfield	Roruks
State College	Woodland Area Parish	Milton Margai, Goderich
State College	Grace, Lewistown	Pujehun Town
Wellsboro	First/Troy	Kossoh Town, Hatings
Wellsboro	Five Star Parish	Kabala
Wellsboro	Middle Ridge/Wellsboro	Yamandu
Wellsboro	Park/Coudersport	Campbell Town, Freetown
Williamsport	Richard & Phylis Noggle	Kossoh Town
Williamsport	First, Muncy	Weaver Memorial, Bonthe
Williamsport	Pine Street	Galow, Masorie
Wilkes Barre	Trinity, Jersey Shore	Boajibu
York	Central & Plains	Lungi Airport
York	Aldersgate, York	Kayima
York	Arms Around Africa	Trinity, Moyamba
York	Bethany, Red Lion	Gomer Memorial, Shenge
York	Calvary, York	Mondema
York	Fawn Grove	Centenary, Bo
York	First, Hanover	Mattru Jong
York	New Creation	Bishop Bangura, Motema
York	St. Pauls Chapel	Yoyema
York	Stewartstown	Lowoma
York	Winterstown	First, Makeni
York	Zion, East Prospect	Monghere
York	Zion, East Prospect	Masiaka
York	Zion, York	Zion, Rutile
York	Zion York	Martyr's Memorials, Rotifunk
York	Marion UMC	Makump Bana

PLEASE JOIN US AND SIGN UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

\$100 per month / \$1,200 per year

ADVANCE SPECIAL CODE FOR COVENANT SUPPORT: # 63643.00

This may be submitted through your church treasurer on the monthly remittance form sent to the Conference Treasurer.

Additional Sister Congregations Needed

Sierra Leone continues to be one of the poorest nations of the world. The overwhelming effect of 10 years of war left the nation in shambles. While Sierra Leone is developing, the fact remains, it will take decades for this nation to care for infra structure, education, health and hunger issues, among a few.

Many Sierra Leonean pastors had no choice but to seek secular jobs since their congregations were unable to support them financially. Since Susquehanna Conference congregations have united in an effort to assist, many pastors are now able to work full time in ministry. Our support enables the families to provide housing, food and for some, education for their children. All of these things seem to be such a given in our society, but are not the norm in poverty stricken nations. Your participation in the Sierra Leone Initiative enables congregations to share the word of God and provide for many needs. Our giving is making a tremendous difference in Sierra Leone.

Currently there are 56 Susquehanna Conference Congregations supporting a covenant relationship. It would be wonderful if we could double this number. For some congregations, being part of the initiative has been frustrating in terms of receiving information from their congregation. We need to remind each congregation that **our primary purpose for the Initiative was intended for the financial support of pastors, all other connections and work was a unexpected blessing.**

It was our hope that some congregations may unite with another congregation in Sierra Leone to participate in additional mission opportunities. Some congregations have sent members, churches have been built, wells have been dug, school scholarships have been established, and some churches been repaired. While this is wonderful, the sad fact remains that many Sierra Leone congregations are dislocated from what we consider normal means of communication. Until recently there were nearly 14 years with no postal services. Only a few cities in the entire nation have electricity, unless through the use of generators. Walking is the major mode of transportation unless by chance you are living in one of several larger cities. All of these things prohibit communication but do not take away from the extreme needs found in Sierra Leone. Please consider joining this effort.

Partner Church Donation Reminders

- Send monetary donations to Conference Office, Accounts Receivable Advance Special #63643.
- Notify by email the Financial Officer in SL, Elfreda Fawundu fredakay2000@yahoo.com.
- Funds may be listed on monthly church treasurer's report under SLI Advance Special #63643. Include a letter stating the funds are for (name of SL partner church) rather than for pastoral salary support (\$100/monthly).
- Email Pam Perna, Initiative Facilitator, (pperma@verizon.net), phone (570-837-5001), or snail mail (Pamela Perna 2084 Paxtonville Road Middleburg, PA 17842), with amount of donations so the payment process to SL continues.

Funds for wells for a partner church should be sent to the Initiative **not** the Well Development Project, any funds above cost of the well will be given to the partner church.