



## Greetings from Liberia – January/February 2022

It is dry season in Liberia. What that means theoretically is that the sun is very hot and it does not rain. For those of you, living in other places, Liberia has two seasons: Dry Season and Rainy Season. When it is dry, it is very, very dry. And when it is Rainy Season, the rains are so heavy they are awe-inspiring.

I say theoretically because here in Liberia, things are changing, as they are in much of the world. Dry Season this year has been cool at night and very hot during the day, but it has also continued to rain. That is strange for Dry Season in Liberia. We are not sure what it means for farming, the ocean level, and many other things that we take for granted but it is just getting to be different.

The people here in Liberia call it Climate Change. That is a politically charged term in the U.S. but here where people live close to the land and without resources for many of the protections against extreme heat and cold, there seems to be no doubt that things are changing. It's not a political issue here, it is just a reality. Things are changing.

So—just a word for those of you in cold climates where friends are suffering from extremes of cold and snow and wind. I live and teach in the interior of Liberia. Here in Totota, Dry Season means the days have extremes of temperature during these months of January and February. On January 20, the 6 a.m. temperature was 61 degrees F (16 degrees C) and the 3 p.m. temperature was 98 degrees F (37 degrees C.) I share that just to give you a feel for life here in Liberia.

I hope your Epiphany season, whether cold or warm, sunny or grey, wet or dry is a time when you experience the Light of God in all the days of your life.

*Linda Johnson Seyenkulo*

Rev. Linda Johnson Seyenkulo

ELCA Missionary to Liberia

Curriculum Director/ Teacher

Louis T Bowers Lay Leaders and Ministers Training Center

Associate Pastor, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

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The students who come to the Louis T. Bowers Lay Leaders and Ministers Training Center(LTBLLMTC) in Totota, Liberia are evangelists who work for no salary in the congregations they serve. They come from the Lutheran Church in Liberia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone. The program is a 2 year program, consisting of four nine week sessions with about four months between each session. Most support their families by farming. Coming to the Level 1-4 program at LTBLLMTC means they leave their farms and their families for those four periods.

The current group of students have been together since January of 2020. Their first Level (Level 1) ended the first week of March. They left on Friday and the following Wednesday, the first identified Covid case entered the country. The good thing about it was they were able to all get home before the country went on lock-down. The bad thing was they were not all together again for a whole year, due to the restriction from the Covid pandemic.

They are, however, a dedicated group of people. They persevered with reading and studying on their own. Here are a few of them to give you an idea of the kind of students in the Level 1-4 training.

\*\*\*Evangelist Esther came to LTBLLMTC reluctantly. She is responsible for several children, and she was not sure she could leave them. Her pastor convinced her and led her to believe the training was only for a short time. She came, not knowing how to read or write and she has never looked back. Her perseverance and desire to learn and read has helped her to become one of the best readers in the class; with that her self confidence has grown.

\*\*\*Evangelist Morgan comes from a way in the interior rural area. There are two churches in his town. One is Pentecostal and the other is the Lutheran Church where he serves. During Orientation for Level 4, Morgan announced that “These good good things we are learning here at LTB are not just for Lutherans.” Then he shared with us that EVERY NIGHT since Level 3, the local Pentecostal preacher comes to sit with him to learn the things about Bible, preaching, ethics, family life, ethics, ATR and Christianity that he learned at LTBLLMTC. I said in disbelief, “EVERY night?” And Morgan said, “Yes, Rev., every night.” And then he added again, “It’s not just for Lutherans.”

\*\*\*Evangelist Moses told us about the ways he has been asked to take on more leadership roles in his parish, especially in the areas of preaching and working with congregation leaders because of his training at LTBLLMTC.

\*\*\*Several of the evangelists shared they have begun to train Lay Readers so Bible reading during worship is good. They study the texts with the Lay Readers, practice the reading, and correct pronunciation of words that are strange, thus making worship services better!

These Evangelists graduate from LTBLLMTC on March 13. Some of them will remain evangelists; some will be ordained as deacons/deaconesses (the evangelists are not ordained) and one or two may become pastors in the two national churches. All of them and their congregations will benefit from what they have learned about ministry and the Gospel. I celebrate their work and their presence. I thank God for the chance to teach them and to learn from them.



Esther



Morgan



Moses

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# Looking Ahead in the Work I Do in Liberia

(I invite you to remember these people and events in your prayers.)

## January – March 13 Level 4 Residential Training

Lutheran Church in Liberia Evangelists from all over Liberia, and 3 evangelists from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone will graduate on March 13, after completing 2 years of study in areas of Biblical Studies, Lutheran Doctrine and Identity, Church History, African Traditional Religion and Christianity, Preaching, Christian Ethics, Evangelism and Language Arts.

## March 13-March 17 Continuing Education for Pastors

This is a yearly conference for the Pastors of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, where the faculty of the Louis T Bowers Lay Leaders and Ministers Training Center, where I teach and develop curriculum, teach theological courses along with the Bishop of the LCL. It is expected that this year's conference will be very well attended, due to the scheduled April election of a new Bishop to lead the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

## March 17-20 National Lutheran Church Women Fellowship (of the LCL) Convention

I am honored to be preaching at the Sunday Convention Worship Service for the National Lutheran Church Women's Fellowship of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. This is an election convention for new officers of the Fellowship

## April 20-24 Biennial Assembly of the Lutheran Church in Liberia

This is an election convention for the Office of Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. The current Bishop, Bishop D. Jensen Seyenkulo has served 2 terms and is not eligible to run again. We give thanks for his leadership and pray God's blessings on the new Bishop-elect, whose name we will know in April.

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## Stay Connected:

### Facebook

I am the only Linda Johnson Seyenkulo on Facebook. Check out my page information about Liberia. Send me a personal message or if you are congregation, have your pastor/Global Mission Chair send me a list of people to add.

### Congregation On-line Ministry

I am available for Confirmation Classes, Video or live stream sermons, Zoom Fellowship Hour, Book Discussion. I'm open to new and creative ways to be in touch during this season of our life together.

### Listserv for Newsletter

Email me at [Linda.Seyenkulo@elca](mailto:Linda.Seyenkulo@elca) for more information and to add people to my newsletter list.

### Missionary Support

If you are interested in supporting my ministry here, check out the missionary sponsorship page at [https://www.elca.org/OurWork/GlobalMission/Global-Service/SupportMissionaries?\\_ga=2.77845010.72199263](https://www.elca.org/OurWork/GlobalMission/Global-Service/SupportMissionaries?_ga=2.77845010.72199263)