

May/June 2023 Newsletter

Greetings from Liberia!



It has been awhile since I have written to you. I have been on medical leave for 11 weeks in the U.S. **I am fine now.** I give thanks for medical care and medical professionals on the continents of my two homes. May God bless all those who work in the areas of health and healing in the world. It is good to be back.

I want to share a story from my ministry in Liberia. This is about Sarah M., a remarkable young woman, who is a senior in high school, shown here with her Group Leader, Winnie D. Sarah graduates in June from Bethany Lutheran High School in Suahkoko, Liberia. She is also a single mother. Through a program called Empowered by Light, a program of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, she has received a full tuition scholarship. This enabled her to be able to continue with her schooling once her child was born.

Another thing you need to know about Sarah is that her student body elected her President of the whole school. Sarah balances caring and supporting her child as a single mother with her studies and a leadership position in her school. Sarah's parents Her parent are so impressed by the support and community of the Empowered by Light program that they are (shhhh! Don't tell anyone; it's a surprise!) giving each of those who are participating in the group a present from their family to say thank you to the group leader and the members of group for their part in supporting her during these past few years.

I work with the Empowered by Light program. We have developed the scholarship program which also provides peer group support at each school which meets twice a month. These groups are led by a community woman and in the groups the student mothers learn about goal setting, peer support, balancing education and parenthood, and the importance of education

We currently have 92 scholarship students in our program. Much of the scholarship support for the program comes from the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, as well as friends of the program and individual congregations mainly in partner churches. Sarah is one of 15 student mothers who are expected to graduate from 12th grade in the next month.

I give thanks for the supportive partners. As I write this newsletter, I want to hold up the dedication of these student mothers, who despite difficult situations, place their children and their education as priorities. May they continue to grow in knowledge and understanding as young women and parents. Thank you in advance for your prayers for Sarah and the other student mothers who are learning and being strengthened in the Empowered by Light Program.

During the next few months, I invite you to hold Sarah and the other student mother graduates in your prayers. May God continue to bless them and their children.

It is great to be in touch with you. Thanks for your support. Check out my Facebook page (<http://web.Facebook.com/LindaJohnsonSeyenkulo>.) Feel free to contact me by email (liseyenk@gmail.com or linda.seyenkulo@elca.org.) I am looking forward to some on-line preaching from here to the U.S., as well as being in conversations with some churches on confirmation presentations and camp presentations. Let me know if you or your congregation have an interest in any of those activities.

Rev Linda Johnson Seyenkulo, ELCA Missionary to Liberia

(picture of me delivering scholarship money to Empowered by Light schools with Quita T, Project Coordinator)

