

THE SENEGAL ADVOCATE
Newsletter for the Senegal Mission Initiative
March 2009

Dear friends of the Senegal Mission Initiative, a program of the General Board of Global Ministries: We send you greetings on behalf of the Senegal UMC. Thank you for your interest and care for our brothers and sisters in the land of Senegal.

This newsletter contains news and information of the following:

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1. Senegal Consultation April 17-18, 2009

A newly refurbished website is available at www.occumc.org/senegal/ with all the information you need to register, attend and enjoy the Senegal Consultation this year. We have a great lineup of speakers and music. Rev. Bleck and Karen Ujereh will be able to answer all our questions about Senegal. People who have recently visited Senegal will be sharing their stories. And before you know it, our time will be gone. So check out the website and get registered to join us at Oak Creek Community United Methodist Church April 17.

2. Consultation Extra's

I was asked what to expect when one came to a Consultation. We will worship and give the main speakers a chance to preach and we will enjoy great music led by song leader Jorge Lockwood from New York City. We will have General Sessions for the sharing of information relating to the Senegal Mission. We will have workshops for sharing of different forms of information. On the side we will have many displays from those who have gone to Senegal. The United Methodist Women of Nord Foire sent back nearly \$1000 worth of jewelry they made for us to sell as a fund raiser for them. Rev. Bleck may have a CD he made of the Senegal Mission work for sale - he charged me \$10 for a copy. We will have offerings during worship, designated for different projects in Senegal. Remember, a dollar goes a long way over there, with salaries often being about \$1 per day. So bring 4 one dollar bills to cover the four worship time offerings. Meals, included in the registration, will be cooked by the local church folk and will be great. Being the first two day Consultation, the planning committee wasn't sure about expenses. Anything left over from registration fees will be given to the Senegal Mission Initiative Advance 12594A account. We have a full agenda with variety and much going on. You will be pleased. Come, ready to enjoy and learn.

3. Itineration following Consultation

Following the Consultation, Rev. Joseph Bleck and Karen Ujereh will be available to travel to local churches. At this point, Karen is available Monday through Wednesday to come to your church in Wisconsin. May 1 through May 15 she is scheduled to itinerate in Illinois through Emmy Lou's office at the Conference Center.

Rev. Joseph Bleck will visit Wisconsin churches April 19-23 and is nearly booked full for that week. The following week, he will visit Illinois, and is booked for Sunday morning. He is available April 26 evening through April 30 in Illinois. Original plans had him in Indiana May 3-7, but those plans just folded. So he is available May 3-7 - whoever calls first will probably determine the area he will be visiting.

Call Tony Fuller at 920-982-6526 for booking either Karen or Joseph or e-mail your request to fullersandra@att.net

4. Paul Armstrong and Dr. Jeff Strong led a team of medical people to Senegal early in January.

They



saw hundreds of people as part of Dr. Bashir's team out in villages. They stayed healthy and in good spirits and had a wonderful trip. You could reach Paul at pastor@occumc.org and he would lead you to his sites for information on the trip. Paul will be hosting a workshop on how to plan trips to Senegal. We are looking for leaders to go in 2010. David Guse is already hoping to lead a trip in 2011, as is Paul. Start planning your trip to Senegal under their experienced leadership!

Consultant Tony Fuller, Director of In Mission Together Patrick Friday, and new mission site overseer Paul Messer traveled to Senegal the end of January. Much time was spent in meetings being updated on what is happening in Senegal and teaching Paul the ropes to take over leadership of mission oversight as Karen leaves Senegal after 10 years to return to the United States. Rev. Paul Messer has served as a pastor and District Superintendent in Alabama for nearly 30 years. Patrick Friday offered him something new in ministry and Paul couldn't turn him down. So he is currently signed up for a year with GBGM as a missionary in Senegal to oversee the work of the mission and to mentor Rev Joseph Bleck in his role as a Superintendent of the Senegal Mission Initiative. Patrick Friday is on the left, Paul Messer in the middle, and Tony Fuller on the right at one of the meetings in Senegal.

5. Partner Church Funding Suggestion - Port Washington

Wondering how to raise money to be a Partner Church with the Senegal Mission? Rev. David Guse sent this item to be shared with you:

A mission fund raising idea that has worked well for us the last two Lenten seasons has been a self-denial offering. When the idea was first introduced in 2007, I had recruited twelve persons to commit to putting aside \$1 per day for the 40 day Lenten season to help provide salary support for pastors serving in Senegal. I have also included a Lenten devotional booklet filled with prayers, stories from Senegal, scriptures, and an intercessory prayer list of people's names and projects in Senegal. The number of participants grew to 20 last year, helping us raise \$800 for our Partners in Mission Program in Senegal. Just think of what most of our churches could raise if they got 15-20% of their membership involved. We have

discovered that this idea is so much easier than planning a series of bake sales and a whole lot less fattening too! Grand Avenue UMC, Port Washington, Wisconsin, Pastor David Guse

6. Senegalize Life Story

As I was preparing to go to Senegal in January, I asked the Senegal Advocates for ideas. One was to interview people in Senegal to learn what life is like. So I did. I have about a dozen stories of people's lives to share from these interviews. I will begin with Edouard Ndecky.

Edouard is 20 years old and grew up in Senegal, the son of one of the UMC pastors. His father was appointed to Bignona in southern Senegal, and Edouard is staying with the Rev. Bleck family in Dakar. He has finished primary and secondary school and wishes to go on to school to be a teacher or coach. In sports, Edouard runs. In 2004, he won a silver medal in the West Africa Championship competition in the 200 meter race and a bronze medal for Senegal in the 100 meter race. From there he was elected to represent Senegal in Mali, and from there he went to Poland to compete internationally. Thus his interest in teaching and coaching. But this year he can not go to school because of lack of money. So he spends his mornings practicing his guitar and writing new songs. In the afternoon he trains and exercises. Most evenings he is home, playing guitar, reading devotions, or visiting friends.

Then he tells me this: In 2003 he had a problem in his leg. A doctor told him to stop his sport running, or the leg would get worse. He went home and cried. For six months he told Jesus if he would fix his leg he would take Jesus as Saviour and tell your story and name every time I run. Friends told him he was crazy. But I continued to trust in my heart and to pray, "Jesus, help me please." In December of 2003 on a Tuesday I was in church praying to see a miracle today. "In a moment I felt a sensation in my leg. The next day I ran at track and the problem was fixed. Jesus worked a miracle in my life." The doctor checked him out and he was OK. And went on to run and win and wears a symbol of Christ so His name is shared. He concluded, "I have no material goods now. I would work for Jesus, for to Him I have given my heart."

Then he got out Rev. Bleck's guitar and sang us some songs, beautifully, in English!

7. Partnership Church Update

My ideas on how this would work got changed by visiting Senegal. Their perspective is that our churches are partnering with the Senegal Mission as a whole, for communications is difficult. Distance and lack of electricity and language are problems, so all communications will be with the Mission Center at the Nord Foire UMC in Dakar with their computer. But I like the idea of having a church to think and pray for, so I am assigning a church to each US Partner for focus and maybe for you to visit when you go to Senegal.

I am happy to have signed Partnerships with Port Washington Grand Avenue UMC, Lodi UMC, Faith UMC in Sheboygan Falls, PoySippi UMC, and the Fox Valley Circuit UMC's. Since the last newsletter, St Pauls UMC of Stevens Point and Faith UMC of Neenah have sent in their Letters of Intent. Verbally I have hopes of St Paul's UMC of Manitowoc and Trinity UMC of Wilmette getting their Letters of Intent in soon.

The need is great and the challenge overwhelming. In reviewing the Senegal Mission Initiative, the financial need is great. Senegal celebrated ten years of being a mission church in Senegal. GBGM wants to begin the process of moving them to independence, so Patrick challenged them to raise 25% of their pastor salary and 25% of their church rent themselves this year. That is there part. On our side, GBGM cut the budget for Senegal 10%, partly out of fear of the present economic situation, and put the onus of raising support for Senegal on the Partnership program through Advance Specials. The goal to cover all the salaries and rents is \$62,000. The present Partnerships cover about \$15,000 of that. I need about 12 full \$3600 Partnerships - or 48 \$900 partial partnership - or some combination in between. Can you help us out?

8. Giving Report

I report the Advance number reported since the last newsletter, representing December and January giving for the Senegal Mission and projects.

Advance #	Title	Amount Given
12594A	Senegal Mission Initiative	7516
14517A	Agricultural Program	2000
14518A	Christian Education	0

14522A	Micro-Credit	1175
14524A	Prison Ministry	450
14525A	Wellness	0
14526A	Women's Skills Center	135
14529A	Youth	53.40

Of special concern to me is the Wellness program. Because of a lack of gifts, two consequences were made known to me during the Senegal visit. One is that Dr. Bashir's nurses were given a 50% pay cut in October by the Senegal Mission office. Ask Karen what she was called for that one! Second is that 3 of 5 feeding centers were closed - that is 105 children who don't get fed twice a week to supplement their home diets. I haven't had anything to report for Wellness since last June. I hope for better next time!

9. Consultant Information

I work part time for the General Board of Global Ministries as a Consultant for Senegal. Patrick had fun telling the Senegalize people that when he calls me, I don't want to talk sports or the weather. All I want to talk about is Senegal. I think I talk about other things sometimes. They cut my salary 10% this year too. And with the Senegal trip and the Consultation coming up, I put in 10X the hours this year than last these months. Guess I believe in the Senegal Mission. Can't solve all of Africa's problems, but we do make a difference in Senegal and the Mission is a success story for GBGM.

My contact information is: e-mail at fullersandra@att.net

Phone is 920-982-6526

Address is PO Box 301, New London, WI 54961

I especially like to come and talk to mission committees or UMW groups and my job is to sign your church up for one of those 48 Partnership positions we have available. Call me! Tony Fuller