

**THE SENEGAL ADVOCATE**  
Newsletter for the Senegal Mission Initiative  
May 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:

1. Senegal's Sad News
2. Senegal Consultation April 17-18 Report
3. Consultation Extra's
4. Itinerations following Consultation
5. Patrick Friday Report
6. Consultation Inspiration
7. Senegalize Life Story
8. Partnership Church Update
9. Giving Report
10. Consultant Report

1. Senegal's Sad News

On April 27, I received a call from Paul Messer, missionary in Senegal, looking for Joseph Bleck. The mission's pickup truck had been stolen, and Paul needed to inform Joseph of that sad event. A week and a half later as I write this, the truck is still not found. The Mission will have to figure out a way to deal with this, as the truck is used constantly for local transport and for Joseph Bleck to visit the outlying churches. \$25,000 would go a long ways in buying a new truck for the Mission. Gifts could go to Advance # 12594A Note Truck.

2. Senegal Consultation April 17-18 Report

We had an inspiring event attended by too few, with about 40 in attendance. People came from Colorado and Georgia, New York and Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois, plus Joseph from Senegal. The worship services were inspiring, with good preaching and wonderful music led by Jorge,

Director of the Global Praise Team of the General Board of Global Ministries. People divided themselves among the various workshops and we had general sessions for information sharing. The food was great, with Senegal dishes highlighted. One quote from a letter received from Indiana after the event, "I want to express my appreciation for all your effort in organizing the Senegal Mission Consultation last week. For me it was a confirming experience as it renewed my hope in the mission work of the UMC in Senegal." Offerings were wonderful too, as preliminary reports say \$1852 was collected during the four worship services.

### 3. Consultation Extra's

Various items from Senegal were available for sale, including jewelry and various articles from the sewing center. Over \$300 was collected from sales. Friday evening's dinner was special, as Chef Kirsten followed a special Senegal recipe she had received from Mbwizu a few years back. Saturday noon we had a choice of leftovers from Friday or a hotter version of another Senegal dish. Friday evening's extra was a Praise Band from Sheboygan Falls who led singing along with Jorge and made for a pleasant conclusion to a long day.

### 4. Itineration following the Consultation

Both Joseph Bleck and Karen Ujereh visited churches following the Consultation. Karen visited seven churches in Wisconsin before returning to Indiana on the Thursday following the Consultation. Rev. Joseph Bleck visited over twenty churches in Wisconsin and Illinois before his return to Senegal on May 4. Though Joseph was worried about his English, he did well and received many favorable reports about his visits to those various churches. Port Washington's Grand Avenue UMC hosted a "Going Home" party for Joseph on Sunday evening, May 3, with a hamburger cookout and a large spread of salads and desserts. About 25 attended, hearing Joseph's wrap-up of his visit as "Very Good" and giving many words of thanks for his time here.

### 5. Patrick Friday Report (Director of the In Mission Together Program)

Patrick came in late on Friday for the Consultation. He was favorably impressed with the event - good speakers, good variety of engagements between leaders and guests, time to get to know people, positive atmosphere, and great facilities for hosting the event, and great music. He hopes we can have another national event in 2010 somewhere in northern Illinois. Patrick spent some time with us determining goals for the Senegal Mission. Karen Ujereh, as the North Central Jurisdiction Missionary in Residence, has a goal of \$60,000 to raise for Senegal projects through the Advance, and Tony Fuller, as the In Mission Together Senegal Consultant, has a goal of \$62,000 for church partnerships. In today's economic climate, those may be challenging goals to meet. But necessary to sustain the Senegal Mission.



### 6. Consultation Inspiration

A Mission Chairperson from a local church attended the Senegal Consultation in April. He heard Missionary Karen Ujereh say she had to close 3 of 5 nutrition centers for children because of lack of funds. He didn't sleep well that night. The next day he went home and a dream was born. He put together a display of kitchenwares and told a story at church Sunday morning of "What ifs" there was nothing to use those kitchen tools on. By the third Sunday after the Consultation his local church raised over \$4200 for the nutrition centers. It takes about \$3600 per year for a

nutrition center to feed around 35 kids twice a week for a year. So children in one village in Senegal will be fed this year because of his concern over what he heard at the Consultation and his going home and doing something about it.



#### 7. Senegalize Life Story

While in Senegal, I interviewed various people about their lives in Senegal. This is Mama Agnes Faye of Fimela's story (not pictured above). Mama Agnes grew up in a Catholic family and attended school through the primary years - for 6 years. She married young and her husband worked in the Roman Catholic Mission workshop. She was a housewife and as the years went by, she had eleven children in 14 years. She was blessed in that all eleven children lived. She had neighbors who lost two or three children as they grew up. Her daily routine was to get up around 5 AM to get ready for the day, getting children ready for school. Morning was for household chores. The afternoon was to prepare the one main meal of the day, often rice and fish. In the evening she encouraged the children in doing homework and music - piano, drums, and guitar. The hardest time of her life was when they had the eleven children at home and her husband didn't make enough at the workshop to buy food for them all. She had to alternate days with the children - one day the school children ate breakfast and the young ones didn't. The next day the school children went to school hungry and the young ones got something to eat - most often a watered down gruel. Life got better when her husband discovered "Methodists" and became a pastor and got paid more than when he worked in the workshop. Doctor Bashir hired her to help at the nutrition center in her home town twice a week, which helps the family budget. All her children are now in school and are eating better. The two oldest are now married and on their own. She well knows how important the nutrition centers are to supplement what the chosen families can provide for their children. Her "blessing" is that though she grew up Catholic, she is now Methodist through the work of Doctor Bashir and life is much better now.

## 8. Partnership Church Update

We welcome Trinity UMC of Wilmette, IL and St. Paul's UMC of Manitowoc as the newest partners with the Senegal Mission Initiative. They join Port Washington's Grand Avenue UMC, Lodi UMC, Poysippi UMC, Sheboygan Falls Faith UMC, the 9 churches of the Fox Valley Circuit, Stevens Point St Paul UMC, and Neenah Faith UMC as partners with Senegal. Cedarburg Community UMC seems to be on the verge of joining us and I am hopeful that Fond du Lac Covenant, Oak Creek Community, the churches of the Minocqua Circuit and Sheboygan St Luke's UMC may join us soon. If you know anyone in those churches, encourage them along. The cause is worthy and the people needy.

I plan on attending the Illinois and Wisconsin Annual Conferences in June and have a table display to promote the "In Mission Together" program. I hope I can get some leads on churches who might consider a partnership with Senegal and who will invite me in to talk to their mission teams about it.

## 9. Giving Report

This is a report of funds given through the Advance to the Senegal Mission Initiative and its projects since the last newsletter.

Advance #	Title	Amount Given
12594A	Senegal Mission Initiative	5677.33
14517A	Agricultural Program	716.00
14518A	Christian Education	0
14522A	Micro-Credit	1050.00
14524A	Prison Ministry	2349.00
14525A	Wellness Program	4484.00
14526A	Women's Skills Center	250.00
14529A	Youth	961.34

I am glad to see the Wellness Program get a shot in the arm. They are running a deficit right now, so keep the help coming! Also, they are counting on the Agriculture Program to give them an income this year, to subsidize the churches. They want to raise cash crops to sell so they can make money for the church to pay the pastors and pay the church rent. Money will help them buy seeds and maybe dig another well. It will be interesting to see how our Advance support does over the summer months. Keep it coming!

## 10. Consultant Information

I just began working with a student on putting together a Web Site for the Senegal Mission Initiative. By the next newsletter, I hope to report to you a Web Site address and even a new e-mail address that may better reflect what I do. In the meantime, I hope to see some of you at Annual Conference in Wisconsin or Illinois.

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