

WELS CONNECTION CLOSE-UP

November 2019



Expanding outreach in Africa

As our sister synods in Africa are maturing and growing more independent, they are reaching into new areas to quench the thirst of those seeking the Water of Life. One of these new missions is the newly registered Obadiah Lutheran Synod—Uganda.

The request for help came from a man named Makisimu Musa, a pastor leading a fledgling church body in Uganda. He caught wind of a Lutheran church body in America called WELS as well as synods in Zambia and Malawi called the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA). He heard about their sound doctrine and practice and wanted to know more.

So, Missionary John Hartmann, the One Africa Team outreach coordinator, assembled a team and planned an initial trip. On Dec. 1, 2018, Hartmann, Rev. Pembeleka (LCCA-Malawi), and Missionary John Holtz went to Uganda to meet Musa. The success of this first meeting led to a second trip to Uganda in June 2019.

Like the first meeting in December 2018, this trip served several purposes: visiting congregations, meeting the pastors and evangelists, building relationships, and teaching God's Word.

Holtz says, "Visiting the congregations allows us to see how extensive this Lutheran synod is and to observe what's 'on the ground.' Attending worship services, listening to sermons, and talking with the leaders give us opportunities to evaluate messages and doctrines being preached; this, in turn, helps inform our teaching approach and coursework. We aim to design and teach the classes that can have the most impact as we move toward declaration of fellowship."

But why the name "Obadiah Lutheran Synod"? Our fellow Christians in Uganda had initially chosen "New Hope" as the name for their synod but soon learned from the Ugandan government that this name was

already in use. As Musa explains: "(We) chose the name Obadiah because we're a small growing group of worshipers of the Lord, and Obadiah means 'worshippers of the Lord.' Obadiah is a minor prophet; it's the shortest book. When you look at our synod, it is also minor. We are (still small) and at a growing stage."

Currently, Obadiah Lutheran Synod serves more than 700 members in 11 congregations.

WHAT CAN I DO?

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