

Messages of Peace and Encouragement

This booklet contains messages of peace and encouragement written by pastors of Lutheran congregations, the Indiana District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and leaders of humanitarian aid organizations serving South Sudan.

RESURREC ION

LUTHERAN CHURCH

4205 Gardiner View Ave
Louisville, KY. 40213
December, 2014

Dear South Sudan Church Leaders,

It is with a great deal of love and respect that I greet you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. How blessed all of us are to know Jesus as our Savior. I can't imagine how empty life would be without His grace and support. This is true both in good times and in difficult periods such as South Sudan is experiencing now.

I first wish to express how pleased I am that my brother in faith John Ater is able to come to you and to express our Christian care. I am privileged to work with him in serving a Lutheran congregation in Louisville, Kentucky, USA that includes several Sudanese along with many other members. As you see him, know that he comes with our prayers and our heartfelt concern for you.

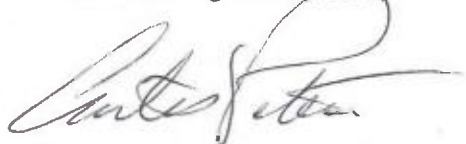
Second, I have been blessed to be baptized into a Lutheran church as an infant and thus I have known since my childhood that God is not the harsh, demanding, dictatorial ruler that some in the world think but that He is instead a God of compassion who sent His Son into the world that we might be saved from sin, from Satan, and from eternal death. It is indeed a privilege for us to now share with you the Lutheran writings that bring this out so clearly. I urge you especially to look carefully at Luther's beautiful explanations of the articles of the Apostles' Creed as you find them in the *Small Catechism*, pages 15-17. I also absolutely love Luther's explanation of the introduction to the Lord's Prayer on page 19. God is indeed our "dear Father." I am so blessed to be in a church that is grounded "on Scripture alone, on Grace alone, and on Faith alone" (*Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fides*). I pray that you will be able to find the same comfort and joy in these Lutheran teachings and writings.

Third, all of us are earnestly praying that South Sudan may experience a new and lasting peace. May God bless you and grant you success in your efforts to help bring this earthly peace. We celebrate the spiritual peace that we already have in Christ, but we know also what a great blessing earthly peace is, too. May God give you both kinds of peace and allow you to rejoice in His great goodness.

It is my firm hope that I also will be able to visit you in person before too long. It will be a wonderful experience.

May God grant you His grace and every blessing.

Yours in our gracious Lord,



(Rev. Dr.) Curtis Peters, Pastor of Resurrection Lutheran Church

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH



1127 East Broadway
Louisville Kentucky 40204
Office Phone (502) 585-4459

The Rev. Michael B. Boyd, Pastor

A Member Congregation of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

November 20, 2014

Dear redeemed brothers and sisters of South Sudan,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ. Know that the people of South Sudan are continually in our prayers that God's everlasting peace would rule the hearts and minds of all your leaders and all your citizens. We pray to God Almighty to guard and protect your nation from violence, discord, and every evil. May the Lord God grant all leaders in South Sudan and all leaders of the surrounding nations a spirit of wisdom, compassion, and mercy for the life and security of all people.

You are our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus in the family of God that knows no boundaries in this world. We ask our heavenly Father to replace violence, hatred, and revenge with peace, prosperity, loving-kindness, and forgiveness to all of South Sudan. May the gospel of Jesus Christ be preached faithfully everywhere.

"And now, Lord, look upon (any) threats and grant to Your servants to continue to speak Your word with all boldness, while You stretch out Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." [Acts 4:29-30]

Rev. Michael B. Boyd
Concordia Lutheran Church

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LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Founded 1888 – Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

December 1, 2014

Dear South Sudanese Church Leaders,

Grace, mercy, and peace to you in the name of our dear Lord, Jesus Christ!

May God give you strength as you work for the cause of peace in your country. May you also be encouraged in the knowledge that true peace—*peace between God and man*—that has been accomplished through the blood of Jesus Christ.

As Peter wrote: *Praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.* (1 Peter 1:3-5).

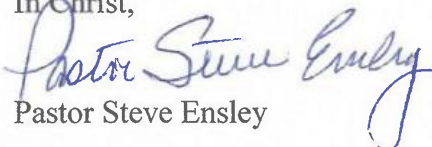
May this hope comfort and strengthen you for the important work you are doing in the Kingdom of God. In this time of Advent preparation for the coming of our Lord, may you find yourselves ready to continue the fight in the knowledge that God has sent His Messenger before you to prepare the way. And may this also be your message: *Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.* (Mark 1: 3).

The Lord came at Bethlehem bringing peace between God and man as the angels declared in the nearby fields: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.* (Luke 2:14). Jesus is true peace. May He lead you and guide you in all that you do and say.

Know that the people of Redeemer stand in prayer for you and your people as you struggle to find earthly peace. And may the peace of the Christ child fill your hearts and minds with joy and courage this Christmastide.

For the people of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Louisville, Kentucky, I remain your fellow servant in the gospel.

In Christ,


Pastor Steve Ensley



THE
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Missouri Synod

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Executive Counselor for Outreach

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INDIANA DISTRICT

Dear Leaders in Sudan,

December 8, 2014

I am grateful to have this opportunity to share with you encouragement from God's Word concerning peace in your country of South Sudan. First, let me say that the Lutheran Christians in the Indiana District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod have been praying for peace in your country. We do not know the intricacies of the situations in your country and do not pretend to tell you what to do. However, as Christians we do know that war doesn't help your people to live well and thrive. But, you already know this. It is my understanding as a Lutheran pastor, that, you government leaders are to serve your people. You are in your positions of leadership by God's ordering. You are to make decisions which will be of benefit to your people and to yourselves. Is it not possible, for you to come to an understanding on the basis of God's Word so that war may be stayed in your country?

St. Paul writes: **"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience."** (Romans 13:1-5)

As I have said, you clearly are leaders because God has enabled you to have this authority. However, along with this authority comes responsibility. Dear leaders of South Sudan you are not answerable only to yourselves, but you are answerable to Almighty God. And what does the Holy Trinity, the only True God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit say about service to others? He says this: **"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."** (Romans 13:8)

May I encourage you to reach out to the opposition with the love of Christ? If you will do this, God will bless you. Love the people whom you have authority over. Love, them and bring about peace in the very near future.

Thanks again for allowing me to share with you my thoughts based on the Word of Holy Scripture concerning your situation.

God Bless you as you strive to serve Him.

In Jesus Name,

Rev. Geoffrey L. Robinson
Executive Counselor for Outreach
Indiana District – LCMS
Ephesians 2:8-10

"The Mission of the Indiana District is to encourage and assist
the Christian outreach and nurture of its congregations and other ministries."



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Dear South Sudanese Church Leaders,

December 8, 2014

Greetings in the name of our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I want to let you know that the people of the Indiana District – Lutheran Church Missouri Synod have been praying for you and for peace in your country. We are concerned about your situation, your lives, and your future. We pray that God will enable the leaders of your country to cease their disputes and work for peace in your land.

Even as we pray, we know that all is in God's hand and all will be worked out according to His time. I have taken particular comfort from St. Paul's Words in Romans 8:28, when I have had to deal with difficult situations. St. Paul reminds us, "**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.**" (Romans 8:28) St. Paul doesn't tell us that everything will good and easy through our lives in this vale of tears. No, St. Paul tells us that we can be certain that God will work all things to our ultimate good. I cannot see how the trials you are going through are good, save perhaps the strengthening of faith which God provides through these trials. But, what I can't see, I know that God does. So dear brothers, don't lose heart. Continue on in the work of serving the people whom you serve by sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with them. Continue on in the hard work of striving to encourage your political leaders to serve their people through bringing about peace in your land.

Finally, let me encourage you with these marvelous words of St. Paul,

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)

God's Richest Blessings to you dear brothers in Christ,

Rev. Geoffrey L. Robinson
Executive Counselor for Outreach
Indiana District – LCMS
Ephesians 2:8-10

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the Christian outreach and nurture of its congregations and other ministries."

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

5231 S.R. 62

Georgetown, Indiana 47122

Phone: (812) 945-2101



Pastor Mark Darnstaedt
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
5231 S.R. 62
Georgetown, Indiana 47122

To: South Sudanese Church Leaders

Dear Brothers in Christ and Workers in the Kingdom of God,

It is joyful news to hear that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is being proclaimed around the world and specifically in South Sudan. The Gospel that we proclaim is a transforming Gospel, changing hearts and lives through the simple but profound message that God loves the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son as the sacrifice for the world's sin that all might be saved through faith in His name. May the Holy Spirit bless your words as you bear witness to Jesus who is the author and perfecter of our faith.

How deep and rich and wide and high is the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Together, in your land and in ours, we proclaim this Gospel with the confidence that God's love is more powerful than hate; that forgiveness breaks the cycle of revenge; that truth disperses the darkness of deceit; that the grace of God manifested in Jesus brings the peace to which the world cannot give.

May God bless you in your purpose to share the Gospel in your land with certainty and boldness. May your bold efforts result in peace, understanding, and joy for your nation and for Christ's Holy Church.

In Christ's Humble Service,

Pastor Mark Darnstaedt





December 2014

To Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We write this letter to bring you words of encouragement and to express our appreciation for your efforts to bring peace and hope to the people of South Sudan.

In a country torn by war and violence, it's hard to understand that love can best be demonstrated by forgiveness, grace, and acts of compassion. Of course this is just the opposite of what the world tells us to do. The world says when we are hurt, we should get even. But Jesus says that when we get hurt, we should "Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those that mistreat you." (Luke 6:27-28) That means we must take risks and extend the hand of forgiveness to those who have hurt us.

Christ's love compels us to serve others. At Kids Against Hunger-Louisville we are guided by these words from 1 John 3:18: "Let us stop saying we love people. Let us truly show it through our actions." Our prayer is that when each nutritious meal is delivered to someone in need, our actions will not only extend compassion and love to the hungry and hurting in South Sudan but also be an example to those that may have done great harm. Love the hungry. Embrace the message of forgiveness and grace. Its power is exponential.

Praying for peace through our Lord, Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale & Tonja Oelker".

Dale and Tonja Oelker, Co-founders
Kids Against Hunger-Louisville
www.lovethehungry.org

A CHILD'S HOPE INT'L



a bridge of hope to the children of the world

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December 22, 2014

Rev. John Deng Ater
United Sudanese Christian Church

Dear John;

I pray that your travel to South Sudan brings encouragement and blessing to your people. Although they have suffered greatly over many years, they have persevered and today lead the youngest country on earth. Their perils and sacrifices may have been forgotten by some but not by the Lord or His people.

As well you know, the Lord's people are aliens on this earth, we are sojourners on our way home – to a heavenly home far beyond the reaches of suffering and pain. As travelers from distant countries we are together united on a heavenly march towards a place of peace. May we not forget that under Christ we are united in spirit and love because of what He did for us. It is for that reason, we find great joy in sharing with you and the people of South Sudan all we can to ease your suffering. Please extend our best wishes to them and share with them the promise we will do all we can to continue to send needed supplies to them as the Lord provides for us to do so.

A day is coming when the conflict will end, when the evil of man is erased from God's creation and when His children faithful to His Son, Jesus Christ, will inherit the Kingdom He has ordained from all time. May we wait deliberately, patiently and faithfully for that glorious day my friend.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Blessings,

Lawrence Bergeron
Executive Director