

Sannu (hello), friends!

As you read this, Bill and I are preparing for a 17-day trip to Jimeta, Nigeria where we will visit and support the Deaf Lutheran church and school in the Lutheran Church of Christ Nigeria (LCCN) Synod. This church is pastored by Rev. Ruth Ulea who is Deaf. We will be gone March 19—April 4 and appreciate your prayers for the journey which is to a remote part of the country in a “red zone.”

Our small group also includes deaf team members Deacon Dorothy Sparks of Minneapolis Area Synod, Bob and Karen Pugh, and leader, Jay Johnson, a Lutheran Army vet who frequently travels to this primitive area to assist with drilling for clean water wells with his nonprofit, Citizens into Action.

Nigeria is located in the western part of Africa and is the most populous nation in all of Africa, spanning an area more than twice the size of California. Muslim and Christian faiths each are practiced in 45% of the population while the other 10% are indigenous beliefs. Of the 80 million who are Christian, nearly three million are members of the LCCN which is growing by 10,000 new members a month! English is the “official” language and American Sign Language is used but Hausa and 250 other tribal languages are also.

While we are there, we will be visiting the school, the church, key Deaf leaders, and participating in their regional Deaf Easter Camp for five days. Our Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association helped build the church three years ago. I will be bringing pastoral stoles with deaf logos to give Pr. Ruth and we are delivering ASL Bible story books.

Nigeria has suffered an almost permanent economic crisis during the last 10 years due to political instability, mismanagement, and corruption. March and April are the hottest months lessening the threat of malaria and snakes. We are busy with expensive immunizations and were blessed to get visas quickly. The terrorist group, Boko Haram, is prevalent just north of where we will be and the church compound is heavily guarded. As we travel into the unknown, your prayers for safety and guidance are deeply appreciated.

Sai an jima (good bye), Pr. Beth Lockard



Pastor Ruth Ulea & husband