Association of Liberian Lutherans in the Americas (ALLIA) Inc.

6th National Assembly

August 18-20,2017

River of Life Lutheran Church

2200 Fremont Avenue N

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411

The Association of Liberian Lutherans in the Americas Inc. (ALLIA) held its 6TH National Assembly at River of Life Lutheran Church from August 18-20,2017 under the theme” Advocates of Light for Enrichment and Empowerment”. Matthew 5: 14-16 You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

**Friday. August 18,2017**

Delegates to ALLIA 2017 Assembly began arriving on Friday, August 18, 2017. The Assembly was officially called to order by ALLIA’s president, the Rev. Dr. Moses Suah-Dennis at 7:00 pm Friday night. Rev. Moses Gobah gave the Invocation. Pastor Christopher Higgins of River of Life Lutheran Church welcomed the delegates. This was followed by a meeting with Rev. Dr. Jensen Seyenkulo, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia who briefed the members and friends about what is currently happening in the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

Dinner climaxed the opening night of the 2017 assembly and session was adjourned at 9:30pm.

**Saturday, August 19,2017**

The official opening of the Assembly took place on Saturday, August 19,2017. Devotion was led by Rev. Moses Gobah, Chaplain. Welcome Remarks were offered by Rev. Dr. Moses Suah Dennis, President of ALLIA, Morris Gbolo, Chairman of the Board and Joseph Roberts, Coordinator of the Assembly, and Pastor of River of Life Lutheran Church on behalf of the church. They wished that the deliberations of ALLIA would be fruitful.

There was the official Roll Call & Introduction of Delegates from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Georgia, Ohio, Canada, as well as two officials (Mr. Joe Young and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Bocko) and from the ELCA Domestic Unit. There were ***???*** delegates at the Assembly.

This was followed by Introduction of Keynote Speaker Mr. Joseph Young by Rev. Dr. Moses Suah Dennis Mr. Young is the ELCA Director of Community Development.

In his keynote address Mr. Young reminded the delegates that in today's complex world, we strive to make a difference in practical, realistic ways. He briefed us on current programs being offered by the ELCA in order to ensure missional sustainability. Mr. Young offered to provide technical assistance and advisement .He provided his unique perspective on a problem that has real solutions available to people sitting in church pews each Sunday and how we can utilize Asset Mapping, Developmental Loan Program and the Off-Cycle Grant Program to access resources and develop a “Steward shift”. The ELCA World Hunger-funded Domestic Hunger Grants support ministries that offer hope and assistance to many thousands of people who experience poverty and hunger in the United States. One must explore abundance versus scarcity we don’t need to fear anymore because our God is one of abundance. Grants fund projects in community development and community-based organizing and advocacy that strengthen the foundations of communities impacted by hunger and poverty. The Community Development Services Program is a Program Unit in the Domestic Mission and provides administrative coordination for the grants process and determine how grassroots work relates to work we do at the national churchwide office.  The experiences and examples he offered were educational, inspirational and thought-provoking. Many powerful and meaningful ministries are flourishing across the United States and he encouraged ALLIA members to utilize funds from ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants to help our churches with their various social ministry programs. This would ensure that they can continue to grow and have a positive impact on a community that is in desperate need.

President Rev. Dr. Moses Suah Dennis recounted the progress ALLIA has made over the last year. He recalled that our Theme “Advocates of Light for Enrichment and Empowerment” is a clarion call to each member of ALLIA to commit to the goal of making the long past due dream of the establishment of the Lutheran University in Liberia a reality. The LCL like Liberia has nothing significant to show when compared to other mainline churches in Liberia. These statements are provocative and add more urgency to our personal and professional commitment to giving back to the country and church that gave him so much. . Consequently, the Association of Liberian Lutherans in the Americas (ALLIA) strongly proposes that the LCL moves beyond its seminary and nursing schools to establish a university. As Lutherans celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation all members of ALLIA should become fully engaged by contributing your time, talents and treasures. ALLIA is strong, growing and determined to fulfill the tasks and responsibilities it was founded for God has called us to this task of working together to accomplish far more than we can do on our own.

In his remarks Chairman of the Board Mr. Morris Gbolo challenged the members of ALLIA to make the LUL a reality. **He** admonished **us to**  be good stewards of resources and inspire generosity to increase support for the LCL and Lutheran University Project. He encouraged members to live out their discipleship in their neighborhoods, workplaces, community and in the world. For all programs and projects continually identify opportunities for involvement, both short and longer-term, relying on the database of member interests and skills as well as personal interaction.

In his remarks, Rev. DR. Joseph Bocko brought greetings on behalf of the Domestic Unit of the ELCA. He reminded us that the theme of the Assembly was timely. The African Nationals Ministries of the ELCA is committed to working with every member of the ELCA, lay and ordained, to support the training and education of people for God’s work in the world. Education opens the path toward a meaningful life of contribution to the common good through whatever career they choose. He applauded ALLIA for making education a priority.

Bishop Jensen Seyenkulo informed the body where the LCL is and where it is going. He recounted some of the challenges but that he remains hopeful. He serves on the National Peace and Mediation Committee as well as the Interreligious Council. He reminded ALLIA of the Just 50/50 Initiative and the need for caution as we embark on the LUL . The cost of college can be daunting, but it is do-able through a phased process. The partnership between LCL and ALLIA represents and undergirds the common mission and shared identity and the goal for higher education. We will continue to pursue support for crucial and innovative approaches to participating in God’s mission in the world.

Mr. George Toto Vice President of ALLIA recognized the guests and visitors to our Assembly.

Business Session II : Strategy Session

The Lutheran University of Liberia Concept and Vision

A power point presentation highlighting the historical overview of Lutheran Education and then ALLIA suggests strongly that if a Lutheran university is to be established in Liberia, it must be consistent with the triadic mission of the Lutheran Church in Liberia; that is, it must address and enhance ministry, health/healing, and education. Therefore, with innovation, the proposed university is to include colleges of Divinity, Nursing and Public Health, Medicine and Pharmacy, Agriculture, and Education. Funding- raising funds for the proposed university will require individual and collective efforts. It will require various judicious approaches to fundraising. Several vehicles for giving will include:

* + Annual Fund,
  + ALLIA Membership Contributions
  + Collaboration with U.S. Lutheran Parishes and Synods,
  + Regional fund-raisers;
  + Grant proposals to national and international church and secular bodies.

In raising funds for the proposed Lutheran university in Liberia, ALLIA is mindful of the importance of staffing the university with qualified/experienced administrators, instructors, and supporting personnel. ALLIA therefore suggests identifying and preparing personnel for the proposed university.

MOU Between LCL and ALLIA

The Lutheran Church in Liberia has established a committee to consider the establishment of a Lutheran university in the country. ALLIA will work with this committee and the LCL.

A special committee will be established to review the MOU with LCL.

Official Launching of the LUL Educational Fund- Pledges &Donations

1. Officially launch its Educational Fund Drive at ALLIA’s 6TH National Assembly in Minneapolis, Minnesota
2. Schedule Regional Fund-raisers throughout the United States and Canada
3. Submit grant proposals to various institutions and foundations for consideration
4. A special unrestricted account will be opened following the Assembly for the LUL.

Business Session III

Report of the Secretary: Action on Minutes of the 2016 Assembly

Discussion

* Leo Johnson suggested the need to assist in training those disarmed following the Liberian Civil War.
* Pastor Titus Clarke recommended the need to create an Endowment Fund or Capital Campaign to assist LCL
* Elijah from the Association of Lutheran Professionals recommended partnerships with private universities in the US to assist with implementation of the dream of LUL.
* Bishop Seyenkulo suggested that we will need funds to begin the assessment for the LUL.
* There is a need for a robust Ways and Means Committee to be appointed

Report of the Treasurer Mr. Joseph Roberts

The Treasurer Joseph Sumoward Roberts presented the Financial Report from the 5th Assembly held in Philadelphia Convention. The Treasurer also gave a preliminary report of the collection from the Assembly.

Adoption of 2018 Budget

The Budget for the 2018 Assembly will be prepared later in consultation with the host. It was also suggested to have a Planning Committee put in place for the next Assembly to infuse transparency and accountability throughout ALLIA’s work and operations.

Regional Fund-raisers Schedule

Regional fund-raisers will be scheduled. Chapters will opt and make suggestions to host regional meetings. Ohio will be willing to host one of the Regional Fundraisers.

Implementation Plan for Benevolence Policy

The Benevolence Policy was discussed but the Committee did not bring any implementation Plan. Bishop Seyenkulo indicated that funds should be channeled through the church in Liberia.

Report from collection of funds for Rev. Kesselly by Sister Deddeh Gayflor

January 2017 $1015

March 2017 $1015 sent to Ghana

July 2017 $610 sent to Rev. Kesselly

Contribution collected for Rev. Kesselly at Assembly

Murphy Anderson $500

Morris Gbolo $600

Deddeh Gayflor $500

Venue of next Assembly

2018 Assembly will be held in Canada August 23-26,2018

Resolution was presented by Rev. Titus Clarke to host an Honoring Program /Banquet in honor of Former LCL Bishop Ronald Diggs. The resolution was adopted but modalities need to be worked out.