

Sudanese (Neur) Worship at Zion Anchorage

Submitted by Rev. Brandt Hoffman, in His service and yours

I have been blessed by God to serve these fine people in Word and Sacrament and visits which echo of both laughter and tears as they live in a fallen and broken world. Not too long after coming to Zion, I was reminded of the war that had been going on for quite some time in Sudan.

A group of Lutherans in Sudan gathering to worship on a Sunday morning were interrupted by the explosion of a Muslim suicide vehicle driven into the Sanctuary. Men, women and children lay on the floor in little pieces. The church and adjoining hospital lay in ruins. This was the fifth such attack on this tiny, rural congregation. After mourning, prayer and the burial of their loved ones, these Lutherans rebuilt, endured, and thanked God for His mercy in the face of evil. I heard that story in 2002 from my Pastor, Charles Keogh (himself a decorated war hero) after which Faith Lacey sent medical supplies for bombing victims in Northern Sudan.



Maria Matik holding Angelina, Rev. Brandt Hoffman holding Daweet. Both Sudanese children were baptized at Zion Anchorage.

Fast-forward to 2008. A Sudanese man named Simon Kuon with a background in LCMS evangelism moved to



Deacon Simon Kuon

Alaska to find work. While here he discovered a large group of Sudanese Lutherans unable to find “proper Lutheran worship” as he put it. What occurred to me was the 3rd article of the Apostles’ Creed. I asked myself “*Is God calling, gathering and enlightening His people here?*” In spite of my inexperience, I decided that God alone makes ministries succeed or fail, so I gave Simon a chance to lead a service. Soon, Zion Lutheran started a second service which was filled with people who looked and sounded different (language and the use of African drums) than previous Zion members, but our adherence to the Bible and Confessions are the same. Deacon Kuon is now seeking to become an LCMS Pastor.

The transition from a mainly single ethnic ministry to a multi-ethnic one has not been without its challenges. We are God’s people who are fallen and sinful and in constant need of His grace, peace and mercy. The people of Zion Lutheran are more concerned with God’s will than any fears that new ethnic territory present to us. We pray that this grand ministry to God’s people of many cultures continues at Zion Lutheran!