

2021 Michigan Annual Conference Liberia Covenant Partners Report Rev. Jon Reynolds Friday, June 4, 2021

In 1999, a Covenant Partnership was established between the Detroit Annual Conference and the Liberia Annual Conference. Over 20 years, our conferences have worked to bless one another and support the ministries of each country. We graced each other's annual conferences and our covenant led to the creation and continued support of the Bishop Judith Craig Children Village in Liberia. You can support the work of the Village, by giving to this year's Annual Conference Offering. The staff at the Village recently sent us a greeting...

[Video from the Bishop Judith Craig Children's Home]

The sacred covenant between Michigan and Liberian United Methodists has borne the fruit of schools, churches, medical clinics, wells, agricultural programs, missionaries and other mission projects. Missionaries from Liberia have itinerated throughout the state inspiring us with their stories of faith. We believe our relationship with Liberia over the past 22 years has led to some great stuff.

With the formation of the new Michigan Conference a few years ago, came the need to create and affirm a new covenant with United Methodists in Michigan. In February 2020, a delegation from our conference traveled to Liberia, where we were greeted with the warmest hospitality. The Liberia Annual Conference voted nearly unanimously to approve the Covenant which Bishop Samuel Quire, Resident Bishop of the Liberia Conference, later signed.

There is still much work to be done. The Michigan Conference's Liberia Ministry Partners have identified the need to support education, clean water, and agricultural initiatives of the Liberia Conference. For just \$300, a child can attend school for one year. \$2,600 can provide a well offering clean and safe drinking water. Support for the Liberia Conference commercial agricultural program provides revenue and sustainability.

While it is unclear whether Michigan and Liberia Conferences will end up in the same denomination after the next General Conference; I know that not all Michigan and Liberian United Methodists are of the same mind about the debates that divide our church. I personally know Liberian United Methodists who share my commitment to the human rights and inclusion of all people. I am thankful for the relationships that we have built with our sisters and brothers in Liberia. I celebrate that we can find common cause in ministries addressing basic human rights and essential community development.

Our covenant with the Liberia Annual Conference is one way, I believe, we can fulfill the mission of the church in our world today.