



IT'LL BE BLUE, LIKE THIS SEASONAL NEWSLETTER, BUT ...

It was wonderful to see an actual print draft of *Liturgies et Cantiques Luthériens: Edition Africaine* and for several of us to be able to do some final, hands-on proofreading. The LCMS-Africa office in Nairobi graciously printed several copies off the draft PDF so that delegates to what we call the “francophone union” could preview the new hymnal.

The “francophone union” is short for the *L'Union des Églises Luthériennes Confessionnelles en Afrique Francophone* (UELCAF). I attended their annual meeting again this year, which was held in Kisumu, Kenya, so as to be in advance of the meeting of the International Lutheran Council. Normally, we'd meet in a francophone country, but with both groups meeting during the same month, it made sense to have both meetings at the same location to economize on travel.

Rev. Tuomo Simojoki, with Lutheran Heritage Foundation—Africa, is negotiating now with a printer while the editorial team makes final corrections. Publication is projected to take place in February. Introductory workshops will follow.



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Teaching LSB in Ghana



Delegates to Ghana's national women's conference singing a hymn I taught.

My August–September deployment this year began in Ghana. The first week I was there, I spent time each day with the Ghana church's national women's conference, held at Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Tema, Ghana.

The delegates to this convention came from all over the country. Many from the north had never seen the ocean before, so one afternoon they made a special trip to the sea nearby to see the waves and walk in the sand. They were overwhelmed by the beauty and extolled the awesome power and majesty of God as they described their wonder at what was, for them, a new perspective on His creation.

Many of these ladies do not read or write, and they speak mostly in their native, tribal languages. This knowledge guided my choices in teaching them so that they could take the words to heart and translate them into their own tongues.

One such song from *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)*, which they are singing in the photo above, is *LSB 411*, “I Want to Walk

as a Child of the Light.” This was a great choice not only for its catchy refrain and accessible English. The third stanza happened to reinforce the conference theme, Hebrews 12:1b-2a: “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.” (This theme was also used by our own Lutheran Women's Missionary League for their 2021 convention.)

Here is how the hymn beautifully elevates this theme in song:

*I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
We shall know the joy of Jesus.*

Of course, we have and know the joy of Christ even now, but we look forward to the joy to be revealed when the race is finished, and the work is done. Meanwhile, we give thanks for these dear sisters who run the race with us, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs along the way with us as well, to the glory of God our Father.



PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- *Rev. Dr. John Donkoh, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (pictured above). Pastor Donkoh works tirelessly to tend to his flock, despite ongoing challenges to his health. May the Lord strengthen him and uphold him to continue his faithful work. He is much needed, loved and appreciated!*
- *The seminaries of the francophone union, as each faces unique challenges in moving forward in the wake of COVID-19; the threats of radical Islam; and the financial limitations of the global recession.*
- *Safe travel during my January deployment.*
- *Successful printing and distribution of Édition Africaine.*

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- *The roof materials making it to Paroisse Wittenberg in Pointe-Noire, Congo.*
- *The faithful mission support missionaries receive from the LCMS Office of International Mission, Mission Central, and the amazing LCMS Africa Team at our Africa home office in Nairobi. Together, with the Lord's help, they enable amazing things to happen!*

A Liturgy for Ghanaian Lutherans

Don't be misled by the title here: Ghanaian Lutherans already have a liturgy. You can't proclaim the Word and administer the sacraments without a liturgy. Indeed, even "non-liturgical" Christians have a sort of liturgy in that there is structure and order in their services, even though they may be much less participatory than those of who have what are known as "liturgical" services.

By "a liturgy" here I am referring to a new musical setting of the Divine Service that has been composed by a Ghanaian liturgical musician, Dr. Newlove Annan. Professor of Music at the University of Accra, Dr. Annan studied church music in the U.S. Though a Methodist, he is very familiar with the Lutheran tradition, as he attended St. Paul's Lutheran School in Accra as a child.

Dr. Annan seeks to express the unity of the Ghanaian people in this musical setting by using styles of different tribes for each canticle. Thus, the Gloria is in the rhythmic pattern associated with people in one part of the country, the Sanctus another, the Agnus Dei yet another. In this way, the whole liturgy embraces the diversity of the Ghanaian nation even as they are united in Christian song. The musical score has indications that are meaningless to outsiders but that make total sense to locals, such as "In the Style of the Cherope." It reminds me of some of the musical indications we see in the Bible in the Book of Psalms!



Dr. Annan is pictured above (center) in at a workshop where we introduced his new setting of the Divine Service to Ghanaian church leaders. Pictured on the left is Mr. Emmanuel Lartey, the keyboardist and band leader at St. Paul's in Accra. He is one of the local musicians who is taking the new hymns from the *Lutheran Service Book (LSB)* I am introducing there and teaching them in the parishes.

The Ghanaians are also learning some of the canticles from Settings I and IV from the *LSB*, with a view toward having a setting of the liturgy in an upcoming hymnal that uses the melodies that work best in their churches — similar to how the Divine Service in *Édition Africaine* uses the "most Africanable" melodies from the three settings in the French Canadian hymnal. They will then have three orders of service: these two, plus their version of "Page 15" from *The Lutheran Hymnal*, which they still use.



A Grandson!

Cheryl and I are happy to introduce Edgar Raymond Magness, born Nov. 4, 2022, at 7lbs, 8oz, and reborn in baptism on Nov. 13. We were overjoyed to be able to attend the service at St. Paul's Lutheran Chapel in Iowa City. Trevor, our oldest, met his wife, Amalia, at the chapel there while they were both attending the University of Iowa, marrying in 2020. We rejoice in the blessing of life and look forward to all that our Lord has in store for Edgar and through Edgar over the coming years. And, yes, though they met at Iowa and live there, Trevor went to the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, and Granddad here is a lifelong Husker fan. So, of course, Cheryl and I got a proper cap to warm Edgar's head!



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