



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Sixty Four Tribes, One God

On April 24-25 forty pastoral and lay leaders of ELCA South Sudanese congregations met in Chicago for a peace summit. Dinka, Nuer and Anyuk tribes were represented. These South Sudanese leaders were joined by ELCA leadership from Domestic Mission Global Mission and Mission Advancement units. The purpose was to address the conflict in South Sudan, conflict within the South Sudanese leadership in the ELCA, to strengthen support and partnership with the new Lutheran communion in South Sudan and the church center and hospital in Juba, and to encourage ELCA South Sudanese youth and young adults. The Holy Spirit was very active and a spirit of confession, forgiveness and reconciliation emerged. The Reverend John Gok Badeng was chosen as the leader, along with a leadership team. What follows is a statement of affirmations on which consensus was reached.

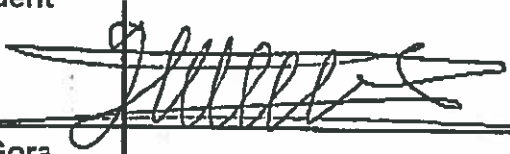
Statement of Peace and Reconciliation


We, the gathered ELCA South Sudanese leaders make public the following affirmations:

1. We must work toward peace among ourselves in the ELCA before we can influence peace in South Sudan. We must call on our families back home to cease fighting a conflict that is destroying our country. We must stop sending money to South Sudan which is used to support the conflict and kill our people.
2. We need a spirit of compassion for our shared humanity. We are all victims, let us all think as victims. The problem-Dinka\Nuer conflict-is also the solution. This means we are honest in confessing that we are all complicit in the conflict in South Sudan and with each other here in the ELCA and the greater expat community. In this time of self-reflection and admission of guilt we believe that we can find the courage and grace to forgive one another, to reconcile with one another, to embrace true dialogue.
3. We ask the ELCA leadership to be our partners in seeking and convening for peace. We ask the ELCA to reach out to ecumenical partners both here in the USA and in South Sudan, especially full communion partners in the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches. We call on the ELCA, which includes us, to gather the voices and testimonies and experiences of those who have worked for peace in order to help us in this situation. This includes our Advocacy ministry to the US government. We believe that if we can achieve peace among ourselves the US Government will notice.
4. We will be ambassadors for peace, especially when we encounter hate language on social media or our own relationships.

5. We believe that the current peace accord in South Sudan must be revisited and that local, traditional leaders must be part of the process. We need a new dialogue beyond the current leaders (President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Opposition leader Riek Machar).
6. We will encourage and gather support from ELCA South Sudan churches and leaders for the new Lutheran church and ministries in South Sudan.
7. We want to send a message of love and encouragement to our own youth and young adults, to be part of the life of the church. We will work to develop resources from Sudanese cultural perspectives to aid in counseling for grief and trauma, depression, post traumatic stress syndrome which are multi-generational. We will develop resources to support our parents and families which engage children and youth around loss and conflicts in their lives.
8. We trust in God's power to bring healing, peace and reconciliation.

Signed:  Date 06-16-2017
ELCA South Sudanese: John Gok Badeng
President

 Date 6-17-2017
Gilo Gora
Vice President

 Date 06/16/2017
Deacon Paul Deng Mawut
Secretary

 Date 6-17-2017
Martha Bec
Treasurer

 Date 6/18/2017
Charles Tuw
Information