

THE NEBRASKA MISSION FIELD NEWSLETTER

NEBRASKA DISTRICT LCMS—August 15, 2006

Partners in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

The first weekend in June the Nebraska District held its convention. The delegates at convention passed resolution #1.01 "To partner with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan." If you would like to read this resolution you can find the resolution on our website at www.ndlcms.org/news/convention/Resolutions.pdf.

As I visited with the Sudanese after convention, they shared how thankful they are that the 245 churches in the Nebraska District are going to partner together and do mission work in Sudan. When I hear them talking, I am reminded of *Philippians 1:3-6*, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." This newsletter is focused on help-

ing you learn more about your new mission field.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa. It is one third the size of the continental U.S. and is 967,000 square miles in North-east Africa. Sudan includes the Land of Goshen, the land that nourished and grew the Hebrews from a clan of seventy to the multitude that Moses led across the Red Sea. It is also the ancient land of Cush, noted in the Scriptures.



The Sudanese that live in Nebraska came out of the southern Sudan area around the Upper Nile region and were driven out of their homes by the 21-year-long war in Sudan between the Christians in the south and the Islamic rule in the north.

There was a peace treaty signed December 31, 2004. The Nebraska Sudanese celebrated all night giving thanks to God for peace. South Sudan has six years to put a government in place and then there will be

an election. At that time, they will decide if there is a North and South Sudan.

During the war, six million people fled south Sudan for their lives. Over two million people lost their lives. Many of the Sudanese living in Nebraska lost loved ones because of the war. There are now four million people seeking refuge and a home.

The Sudanese living in Nebraska have a great desire to make sure their loved ones get to hear about and be instructed in the Lutheran Confessions. They are excited that the 245 congregations are partnering with them to take God's Word and His Sacraments to Sudan.

This partnership is just starting to develop. You will be hearing in the future ways God might use you to be involved in this

partnership. If you have any questions about Sudan, or would like the Sudanese leaders or me to come to your congregation and share about Sudan, please contact Carol Oetting at the District Office.

Together In His Mission Service!

Revelation 7:9—After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

NEBRASKA DISTRICT LCMS

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JOHN DEANG-MISSIONARY-AT-LARGE

From Sudan to America: One Pastor's Story of Plight and Faith



Standing in St. John Lutheran Church in Seward on June 1, 2006, following his ordination, the Reverend John Deang was at home. Yet a half a world away from his original home, the Reverend John Deang, a graduate of Concordia University in Seward and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, has an incredible story of faith to share. Originally from Sudan, John was part of a mass exodus with his family in 1983 to Ethiopia. His parents decided to leave because of Muslim persecution. John's father was an evangelist, his uncle a pastor.

John was in Ethiopia from 1st through the 12th grade and then went to Nairobi, Kenya, with his older brother. From there he and his brother had the chance to come to the United States. John says he had to fight with his brother about whether to go to the States or return to Ethiopia. John thought he wanted to return to Ethiopia, but his brother wanted John to come to the States. In their culture, they "bow" to their elders, so he came to the United States. John went to an Ethiopian refugee camp in Kenya to start the process of coming to the United States, and in June 1995 he

immigrated to Fort Worth, Texas. There he worked at St. Paul Lutheran Church and in 1998 was commissioned as a deacon.

Pastor S T Williams stepped into John's life at an LCMS conference in St. Louis at the end of 1998. Williams asked John what he wanted to do and John replied that his vision was to be in the church and to do more in a pastoral line of work. At that time he was attending college in Fort Worth, taking engineering classes. Pastor Williams told him there was a small college in Nebraska and Deang would be able to work with African immigrant ministries at his church while attending classes. This excited John and he toured Concordia University in Seward, got an application, was accepted and came to Lincoln on December 24, 1998, starting classes in January of 1999 and graduating in the spring of 2002.

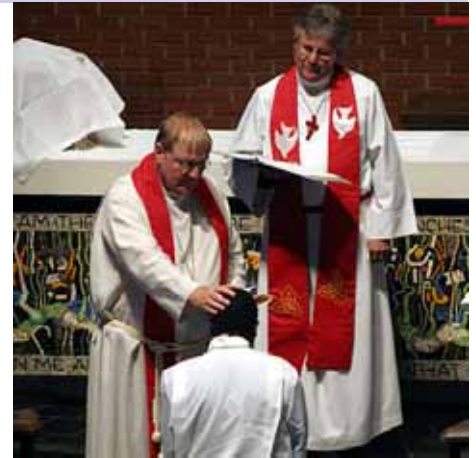
In the fall of 2002, he started taking seminary classes. Later, serving as a vicar at Christ Lutheran in Lincoln, he had opportunities to reach many people and also work with the District African Immigrant Ministries (AIM).

In their culture, they "bow" to their elders, so he came to the U.S.

John says the number of Sudanese immigrants in Nebraska is growing, and adds that it is important that these newcomers are received by members of a similar culture to help serve as a bridge between the American and Sudanese cultures.

He said that immigrants come to the United States with almost nothing, but AIM helps them get settled and brings them to church. Worship services were held at Christ Lutheran twice a month and it has grown from having three families to anywhere between 50 and 100 people coming to worship.

Two years ago, he looked to the future and said that he would finish his vicarage in 2005 and return to Fort Wayne. "I will



graduate in 2006. It's hard to tell what I will do then. Hopefully, I will get placement as a pastor. I would love to stay in Nebraska, but really, that's not for me to choose...it is for the Lord."

The Lord decided that Deang should stay for a while in Nebraska. A special aspect of the convention opening service this past June was the ordination and installation of the Reverend John Deang as the Nebraska District's missionary-at-large to African immigrants. President Kieschnick, who participated in the installation, recalled how, in 1998 in Austin, Texas, he installed Deang as a licensed lay deacon. As a part of this special celebration, John's installation, he received a stole made by individuals in Sudan.

John is at home in Nebraska. His busy schedule is filled working with and closely connecting to his people from his home a half a world away.



"...that's not for me to choose...it is for the Lord." Reverend Deang

CAMBRIDGE-ARAPAHOE COMBINED VBS

Discovering the Riches of Christ!...

was the theme for a combined VBS at the churches of St. Paul's, Cambridge, and Trinity, Arapahoe, in Holbrook the week of June 12. Pastor David Otten and Vicar David Feddern jointly led the VBS.

Six pre-schoolers, eleven elementary students, thirteen junior and senior high teachers' aids, and eleven adult volunteers met Chester the Chest who had lost his five gems. It was the job of the VBS group to find the gems.

Day 1-the diamond was the greatest treasure, Jesus. Day 2-the sapphire showed how Jesus is God's treasured Son. Day 3-an amethyst told how Jesus became poor to make us rich. Day 4-a ruby was found

relating to the great price that Jesus paid to take away our sins. And day 5-an emerald helped the VBS group to see how Jesus treasures us.

The week was filled with fun, songs, learning of Jesus, and, of course, snacks.

This combined effort was part of Vicar Feddern's Evangelism Module for Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. A lot of hard work, a joint effort, and creative advertising made this event successful.

There is a plan to follow up this event and hold another joint VBS in the summer of 2007 either in Holbrook or Beaver City.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1:7



Treasure Cove-
Discovering the Riches of Christ



crafts-crafts-
crafts-crafts-
crafts-crafts



MISSION FESTIVAL CELEBRATION DINNER



Sandhills Ministry



Reverend John Deang-Pres. Russ Sommerfeld



Hispanic Ministries combined



Campus Ministries



Sudanese Ministries

Highlights From a Wonderful Evening

From the Sandhills to the sounds of the Sudanese--that's what the Mission Festival Celebration Dinner entertainment was all about.

Vicar Safarik, Rev. Eickhoff, and Rev. Schaff helped to show the challenges that face these missionaries in the vast and rural location of the Sandhills.

Pastor Ricky Jacob and Regina Scott (a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation) spoke about the blessings God has bestowed on the efforts at Winnebago.

The newly ordained Nebraska District missionary-at-large, Reverend John Deang, was interviewed by President Russ Sommerfeld as a way of helping people to grasp more about the new missionary and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan.

Pastor Hormachea and Pastor Santamaria led a musical group in Spanish music and involved the crowd in the song *ALABARE*.

Stacey Swan and Mark and Leanna Meyer brought students from the campus ministries of Omaha, Kearney and the University Lutheran Chapel in Lincoln. They did a skit that helped make the connection on how "Joe College" deals with the pressures of college life and "Joe's" commitment to his/her faith.

A trio including James Riang and Dech Machar from Christ Lutheran in Lincoln and Peter Gatkuoth from the Sudanese Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mission sang the song "At the Voice of Jesus Christ, Who Will Go and Work Today?" in their native language, Nuer. The Rev. John Deang joined them later in the evening.

What a wonderful evening and a great way to support this very convention's theme,

"Nebraska Fields...Nebraska Partners."



Winnebago Ministry

NEBRASKA FIELDS...

NEBRASKA PARTNERS

"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest."

John 4:35b



Winnebago Ministry-Pastor Jacob

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRY, WINNEBAGO

Overflowing with Many Blessings



“Grace and Peace to you from **Ma-Ona** our Heavenly Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!” . You may hear this greeting on the Winnebago Reservation.

The 13th annual Vacation Bible School was held the week of July 16 at Winnebago. *Jesus, the Riches of God's Grace*, was the theme. Pat James from Fort Wayne, Indiana, came to Winnebago to help with the music and aid with the puppets. Kelly helped as well.

A group from Trinity Lutheran Church in Blue Hill, headed up by Pastor Jim Witt and his son, Dan helped with events during VBS. This group also assisted two elders with yard work, painted a ramp, and helped with the construction of the parsonage garage. Evan helped as well.

Pastor Jacob was overwhelmed and thankful for the many faithful servants and his wife for helping to make this VBS such a wonderful success.



Jesus Our Savior Lutheran Preschool (JOSLP) graduation and baptisms were held on May 19. Three students graduated from the preschool program on the Winnebago Indian Reservation in northeast Nebraska. That brings the total number up to 28 preschool graduates over the past eight years!

The preschool graduation had about 80 people in attendance and was held at the Winnebago Senior Citizen Center. About 20 people came from the neighboring West Point Circuit congregations. The graduation service was followed by a wonderful feast put on by the families of the graduates. Also served were three sheet cakes to add to the celebration.

The graduation began with the baptism of four children. One of the graduates, by the name of Ricky, had heard the Good News about Jesus and about the waters of Holy Baptism and wanted to be baptized. Ricky's sister Mya and newborn brother Desmond were also welcomed into God's family that evening.

Another preschool child, Jaciah (pictured to the right below) asked to be baptized. That evening four children had their sins washed away and received the sign of the cross both on their foreheads and upon their hearts to mark them as redeemed by Christ the crucified. These baptisms were done by Pastor Ricky Jacob.

To continue the blessings over the past several months, the "Action Team" has been meeting with the Tribal Council in order to partner together and make the vision of an expanded Lutheran school a reality.

JOSLP is in the process of presenting articles of incorporation with the state of Nebraska so that they can become a Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. This would enable them to obtain tax exempt status, as well as seek grants and donations from various entities.

Paul Brandt, a consultant on the matter, has written the Readiness Study Report recommending the plan to expand JOSLP to a Lutheran School move forward.



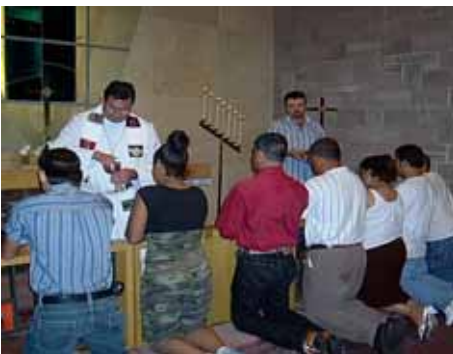
By the Grace of
God



LA TRINIDAD-HISPANIC MINISTRY, LEXINGTON



Frente



Communion

Confirmation 2006

For several years, La Trinidad has been involved in sharing the Gospel with Hispanics in the Lexington area. The Hispanics in this area seem to be very transient. Some people who attend La Trinidad activities move to other places for better jobs. Records show that a lot of people have heard the Gospel through this ministry. Pastor Hormachea feels blessed to see how the Word of God works in the hearts of the Hispanics in Lexington.

There are many activities consolidated in the Hispanic ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church, such as worship services, Bible studies, institute classes, special services, Christian movies, and other events.

This year 49 people in the Lexington area are involved in the Hispanic ministry and



Final

eight people in the North Platte mission. Our Redeemer Lutheran Church helps the Hispanic ministry by furnishing the facilities for their activities. In the Kearney mission there are five people involved. La Trinidad has 62 Hispanic people involved in their ministry so far this year.

Praise be to God!

UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHAPEL-LINCOLN

One Baptism Leads to Another...

Susan chose January 28, 2006, the Chinese New Year, as the day she wanted to be baptized and become a child of God through her confession of faith. (To the Chinese, the New Year means a new beginning, so it was very symbolic for Susan to choose the New Year as her day of Baptism.) After many years of learning, and through many conversations with friends, she decided that before her best friend P.C. returned home to Singapore, she wanted to openly share her faith in Jesus as her Savior with her friends. So, on this cold morning, a small group of close friends gathered in Pastor Bill's basement to share stories, encouragement, and this miracle of God.

After her baptism, Susan began meeting weekly for one-on-one Bible study and prayer with Leanna, the women's ministry director at the Lutheran Chapel. Her faith after Baptism became more apparent as she began inviting classmates and friends

from campus to church with her. She also came to trust the Lord more with her family and her studies.

Susan became good friends with a couple of Chinese Christians and a few who were still asking many questions about faith in God. One of those was Mia. Mia had been coming to the Lutheran Chapel for about two years and always had much interest in learning about Jesus, but she had a few questions that were hard for her to get past. The clock was ticking on Mia's time here in the United States and Nebraska. Her family needed her to move home, as her father was very sick and they wanted her to be home, plus they needed her financial support. Just three days before Mia's move home to Taiwan, on June 17, 2006, she was also baptized at Pastor Bill's home with a small group of friends. She read a wonderful testimony of a God-given faith and her joy in becoming one of His children.

Please pray with us for both Susan and Mia as their new faith is tested and strengthened. Mia's father past away just a few weeks after she moved home.



ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

The Children Still Laugh in Sudan *—Excerpts from Pastor Ray S. Wilke, President, Orphan Grain Train*

There are stories of awesome uncleanness coming out of Africa. AIDS threatens to consume an entire generation in sub-Saharan Africa. Malnutrition kills half of all children before their fifth birthday. Twenty-year-long wars turn a peaceful culture into a blistering nightmare, such as in the refugee camp 25 kilometers north of Khartoum, Sudan, where survivors of a twenty years' war, mostly women and children, cling to life on the desolate desert. They heap up walls of mud covered with sticks and palm branches for shelter. Seven lightweight South Sudan children hoist themselves onto the aluminum United Nations pump handle. When lowered, it brings precious water from the depths of the desert reservoir. Perhaps mother will bring rice tonight from her gleanings in the city to add to the water, perhaps not.

Andrew Natsios, Executive Director of World Vision, writes: "I saw a boy who was 15 years old and completely emaciated. He had scabies all over his body and was clearly traumatized. I asked the refugee camp superintendent to find out what had happened to the boy. 'Both my parents were killed as they fled the mercenaries. My sister was killed too. My brother-in-law, who is an older person, took his remaining children and me; we walked from our village to this camp. After a few weeks my brother-in-law said he could feed me no longer and asked me to leave. I wandered around the camp looking for someone else to take me in. I found a neighbor who took me in and fed me for two weeks. She then asked me to leave because there was not enough food for her children. I went hungry. After several days someone from a non-governmental agency took me in. I have been here four days.'

The boy was shaking and barely speaking. I could imagine what was going through his mind.

I knew I could not at the present time get personally involved because there were thousands just like him and my present resources were not adequate. On the plane back I had to leave my seat three times for the men's room as I began to break down. I thought about what the boy had been

through and how great was my desire to help. But I could not do anything without starting a riot."

The mystery is this: Why do the children of poverty laugh so openly and loudly in the midst of their need?

Last December in the middle of Africa I saw multitudes of children whose only delight on earth is the freedom to play in the red clay on land they will never own. They run and jump and giggle with glee at the sound of a morning greeting from a neighbor. Their morning meal is still in the bush. Dinner is a sugar cane stump. They greet a stranger with an open-faced grin and "hello," accompanied by an out-thrust hand.

When I asked Lutheran Bishop Andrew Elisa how these throngs of people survived in this desert place, he said simply, "The Angels. I have no other explanation! They have no jobs, no source of income, and the United Nations food supply ended last month."

Suppression has been the byword since 1983 when a military coup launched the 21-year-long war between the predominantly Christian south and the Islamic north. Six million people of the South fled for their lives, fording crocodile-infested rivers amidst a hail of bullets. More than two million died. Four million now seek refuge and home.

The fields of Sudan are "white" for harvest. Central Africa, rife with war,

starvation and disease, is hungering most for Good News. The political climate in Sudan insists that the Church act now or possibly lose this strategic opportunity. It is five and a half years to "zero" hour. That is the time allotted before the South of Sudan must choose to remain as one country with the North or to secede. The massive deposits of oil in the South make this region very attractive for Northern exploitation. The twenty years' war has been an effort to exterminate the southern peoples as Arab migration presses hard on the African South. Muslims in the region are exercising a "reign of terror" against the lightly defended South.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sudan (ELCS) is one of the few Christian voices heard in north Sudan and well established in the South. They are making strong efforts to prepare infrastructure for returning refugees, both in terms of life-skills and in Christian training. The ELCS is a confessional church with capable leadership and a strong desire to announce Jesus, even in the face of overwhelming obstacles.

The Nebraska District LCMS is uniquely postured to be used by the Spirit to mobilize the harvest. The LCMS Board for Missions is fully supportive of the effort with strategic people in place. LCMS World Relief and Human Care is supportive as well, with preliminary plans for medical support. LCMS RSO's, LHF, M.O.S.T. Ministries, LWML, and Orphan Grain Train are involved as well.



DIARY FROM SUDAN-A MISSIONARY-AT-LARGE Excerpts from Rev. Deang

On June 4, 2006, I left Omaha. I met Rev. Dr. Just and Pam in Chicago. They were taking the same route to London and Khartoum to visit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sudan (ELCS). Rev. Dr. Just is a professor at the Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, and Pam is a parish nurse in California. We took different flights to London and in London boarded the same flight to Khartoum. We arrived in Khartoum by 2:05 a.m. Sudanese local time on June 6, which is 6:05 p.m. U.S. Central time on June 5.

On June 7, Rev. Andrew Elisa of the ELCS, Rev. Dr. Just, Pam and myself visited the Salaam Internal Displaced Persons Camp (IDP Camp). We met with Deaconess Mary who is the cashier for the ELCS.

On June 8, we visited St. Paul Charity Hospital in Khartoum and Rev. Dr. Just worked on the curriculum for the deacon and deaconess program, making some adjustments to the Seminary courses as well. Rev. Dr. Just and Pam met with the hospital staff.

June 11 was established by the ELCS as "Youth Day." However, not all entities who are working in Sudan in the name of the Lutherans agreed to this--only those who are operating in the Khartoum-Yambio side. We all went to the IDP camp, Jebeles Oulia, to celebrate the "Youth Day," where I preached for the occasion. The text that I preached on was Romans 8:14-17.

On June 12, Rev. Andrew Elisa, Rev. Claude Houge, Rev. Dr. Paul Muller, Rev. John Deang, and Rev. Ken Greike, whom the people of the ELCS called the grandfather, went to meet with Atem Garang Deng at the parliament (equivalent to the White House in the U.S.). Deng, the head of the parliamentarians from the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) side, updated us with what is going on in Sudan regarding the peace and its implementation obstacles. He appreciated the Lutheran Church in America, especially the Missouri Synod, for supporting the peace effort in Sudan and also supporting the Sudanese refugees through Lutheran Immigration, Lutheran Social Services, and Lutheran Family Services. He mentioned the support that

the Sudanese women in Nairobi receive from the LWML, as well.

We then met with the leadership of the ELCS. The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Andrew Elisa, the president of the ELCS. He spoke on the genesis of the ELCS in 1993, about the training of women and youth in all regions in Sudan, and how the leadership of ELCS should carry out the self-sustaining program to all congregations in the ELCS.

On June 13, a meeting was held with the Minister of Education in the Unity State [Bentui], Mr. William Duad Riek. The agenda regarded the partnership between the Lutherans and the Department of Education in the Unity State [Bentui]. Mr. William said, "During the war most of our children in the Unity State were forced into Islam because of the education. Now as the war ended, we want our children to be taught by Christians, not Muslims." A meeting with President Andrew of the ELCS took place. The discussion centered on a workshop for the evangelists, budget issues, and the two schools in the Nuba Mountains.

On June 18, I went and preached at Remela IDP Camp, where I met only 20 people in the church.

On June 19, I left for northeast of Upper Nile to a city called Renk and then on the 21st day of June proceeded to Guelguk. In Guelguk, I met with the Evangelist Michael Gatdet Kueth, who took some training at the Trinity Bible School in Maiwut-Pagak area in the Eastern part of Upper Nile. He and the administrator of the city of Guelguk had shown me the area including the school and the clinic that was built by the Oil Company. In the clinic there are not enough medics, only one nurse who had two years training. UNICEF is providing the necessities and medications that are needed. There is a disease caused by sand flies killing a lot of people of all ages. This disease has become an epidemic in the Northeast of Upper Nile where the acacia forest is growing. I would suggest that the body of Christ here in the State of Nebraska or beyond could see how we can minister to these people through the field of our professional health providers. Also in the Guelguk and Maiwut-Pagak areas, there are school children who meet under the tree as their

classroom.

On June 25, I had opportunity to minister to a family who lost their loved one in Renk. I had to conduct a graveside service for them and the rest of the people who came to help them dig the grave.

On July 2, I preached at the Mendela Displaced Persons Camp.

On July 3-11, I was invited by the group of the ELCS from Unity State to go and see their mission stations and do some teaching there. However, due to transportation fluctuation in Sudan, I did not make it to the Unity State. I wished to do it because the opportunity there to proclaim the good news was needed very much. I would call this opportunity to go to Unity State as "the Macedonia" call to me. *During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."* [Acts 16:9] The same call I received from the Christians in the Unity State in Western Upper Nile.

On July 13-17 I left for Renk and surrounding cities where I introduced the basic Lutheran teaching of the Small Catechism. They confessed to me that they never see any book like that with all the Scripture references. In fact, those I talked with have Presbyterian background. I just told them God-willing I may see you again, then I departed from them.

On July 18-20, I was on a fourteen-hour boat ride to sail upstream on the White Nile to Malakal where I met the team who came from the installation of the Bishop Andrew in Yambio. We were in an open boat where a rain could rain and there was nothing that we could hide or cover ourselves with.

On July 20-23, Pres. Sommerfeld, Rev. Kent, Rev. Houge, and I met with all the leadership of the ELCS at Malakal. We had a good visit and saw the needs that our partnership could come in and help with, such as building the church compound, guest house, etc.

On July 23, we left for Khartoum.

On July 24, we returned to the United States.

PLEASE PRAY FOR US

Sudanese Evangelical Lutheran Church in Omaha:

1. That God would provide them a place to worship and grant them peace during their time of transition.
2. If it is God's will to provide the Sudanese with a van or the resources to purchase a van to transport their members to church.
3. Ask for God to continue to guide and direct the leaders of the Church.

Hispanic Ministry:

1. A prayer of thanks for the Mariachi group that traveled around Nebraska sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Campus Ministry:

1. That the Holy Spirit would prepare the hearts of the students to connect to our churches and campus ministries where they are attending school.
2. That God would guide and direct our campus ministry staff as they build relationships with the college students.

Winnebago Ministry:

1. A prayer of thanks that Jana will continue to be the preschool director.
2. That the children who are registered for preschool will start preschool.

The Reverend John Deang



CONGRATULATIONS AND
RICHEST BLESSINGS TO
THE REVEREND JOHN
DEANG AS HE BEGINS HIS
WORK FOR THE NEBRASKA
DISTRICT AS MISSIONARY-
AT-LARGE TO THE AFRICAN
IMMIGRANTS IN NEBRASKA

Reverend Richard Boring works with the ministries of the Nebraska District. He is available to visit with you about existing or developing ministry opportunities across the District. He is also available to help coordinate a servant event between your congregation's group and a ministry in Nebraska. Reverend Boring is available via phone or email to answer any questions you may have. Reverend Boring may be reached at the Nebraska District Office at 888-643-2961 or richb@ndlcms.org.

The Mission of the Nebraska District is to resource congregations, leaders, and related organizations in their mission of discipling the saved and proclaiming Christ to a lost and changing world.