



Friends of the Anglican Province of Alexandria
Supporting churches in Egypt, North Africa, Horn of Africa and Gambella
Registered Charity 1181201



FAPA NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2020

Dear members and friends,

Praise the Lord! Prayers answered! We have a new website! www.fapa-egypt.org

The administrative actions necessary on our change of title from EDA (Egypt Diocesan Association) to FAPA (Friends of the Anglican Province of Alexandria) are now complete, and our new website - our new 'home' - is open to visitors! It is my hope that it will become a virtual meeting place which members will visit regularly for news and, most importantly, for prayer.

Now that we have an operational FAPA website, I invite all members to join Trustees in a recruiting drive for new members. We are very keen to increase our prayer base, and I would ask you to take time out to contact all those you know who have a connection with churches in the Province - please invite them to visit our website, learn more about FAPA and consider getting involved.

I attach a draft letter which you may wish to use - attractive leaflets are also available from Michael secretaryfapa@gmail.com He will be pleased to put some in the post to you.

We would also like to engage more UK churches in supporting the Province – again members are asked to introduce FAPA to potential church partners. Full details are on our website under the tab: 'Get Involved.' I commend the Powerpoint video which you will find on the website under the tab: 'Library'!

Informed prayer remains our primary mission, and this newsletter brings a focus on the particular needs of the Horn of Africa and Gambella. Bishop Kuan, the Commissary Bishop of the Diocese, has kindly contributed news and prayer requests for this newsletter.



FAPA member Rosemary Burke, who served in Ethiopia from 2009 -2018, also calls for prayer around the current hostilities in the north of Ethiopia. Rosemary also brings us a reminiscence of Christmas in Ethiopia, and trustee Canon Andy Wheeler tells of his pilgrimage to the ancient Christian places in Ethiopia in 2019.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your fellowship within FAPA and to wish you a safe and blessed Christmas and New Year.



+ Bill

News from Bishop Kuan, Commissary Bishop for Horn of Africa and Gambella



1. Introduction Our ministry in the Horn of Africa is centred in Addis Ababa and Gambella, with most of the congregations in the Gambella region. In Addis Ababa, apart from St. Matthew's, we have now planted another church, St George's Church. This new church plant is in Tulu Dimtu, which is located in Akaki Kaliti sub-city, at the south eastern edge of Addis Ababa.

Please pray for the development and growth of this new church plant.

2. Key Local Leaders As part of the indigenisation of church leadership, two clergy have been appointed to provide leadership roles. Rev Jeremiah Maet Paul has been appointed as the Chairman of the Leadership Committee in Gambella. He, with the leadership committee, provides the broad leadership to facilitate and encourage the ministry in Gambella. Rev Dr Gidey Seyoum has been appointed as the Executive Director of our newly registered community services. (See para 5 below.)

Please pray for all our clergy and lay leaders, that we will serve God well by leading well.

3. Discipleship and Christian Maturity In February of this year, all clergy and bible school students attended a clergy retreat on discipling the local church using material developed by Mathetes Trust. The material ***Rooted in Jesus***, is 'a group course in Christian discipleship written for use in Africa.' (<https://mathetetrust.org/rooted-in-jesus/>) The retreat was led by Bp Martin Breytenbach, retired Bishop of the Diocese of St. Mark the Evangelist, South Africa. We are grateful to Mathetes Trust and Bp Martin and the team of trainers.

We have made ***Rooted in Jesus*** the core curriculum for growing and discipling the local church in both Dioceses of Gambella and the Horn of Africa. All our clergy are using ***Rooted in Jesus*** as part of their ministry tools, and all future ordination candidates are expected to show competency and currency in discipling using ***Rooted in Jesus*** as a prerequisite for ordination.

Please pray that our church members will grow as faithful and obedient disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Rector Vacancy in St Mathew's The rector vacancy is in the process of being filled. We have interviewed a clergy person who has been assessed to be a very suitable candidate and we are now in the process of recruiting him, with early 2021 as a possible timeframe for his arrival to take on the post.

Please pray for the successful completion of this process.

5. Community Services We were able to register a community services NGO entity this year. Rev Dr Gidey Seyoum has been appointed as the Executive



Director of the Community Services NGO. We have several community service projects in the pipeline – we would like to highlight one, both for information and for prayers.

Water Ambassador (WA) Project: Clean drinking water is a major need in Ethiopia. We have secured a Singapore-made, high tech water filter (Wateroam - <https://www.wateroam.com/>) that can provide clean drinking water for 15 to 20 families apiece. The device, though costly, is economically viable if it is used to serve small groups. To realise this aim, we are planning to appoint Water Ambassadors (WAs) to distribute the water. This project is also an economic empowerment initiative as the WAs will earn a small income.



6. Anglican Unity Schools We are now in the process of starting, and registering with the government, schools in Gambella, beginning with

kindergartens. These schools will be in our church compounds. We have chosen the name ‘Anglican Unity Schools’ as the broad brand name.

Please pray that this ministry will bring much benefit to the children in our community.

7. Building of Cathedral of Good Shepherd We are in the process of putting up a modest building to serve as the cathedral church of the Diocese of Gambella, the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd.

Please pray for the safety of the workers and the progress of the work.

8. Political Situation - Please pray that peace would return to the Tigray region.

Rosemary Burke calls for ‘prayer around the hostilities in the North of Ethiopia where government troops are in armed combat with local resistance. There are rumours of atrocities and thousands of refugees going over the border into Sudan, many of them children. So far, I understand, Gambella has been peaceful, it is far away. But some people from Tigray live and work there so there could be tensions and there are resistance groups who could take advantage of the situation.

- Pray for the leadership and troops on both sides to exercise restraint - both leaders claim some sort of Christian affiliation.
- Pray that peace efforts may bring fruit.
- Pray that resources will be made available for refugees, both those fleeing to Sudan and those from Eritrea resident in camps in the affected area.
- Pray that troops will not follow a scorched earth policy and will not destroy the ripening harvest as they move.

PILGRIMAGE TO ETHIOPIA, EIPHANY 2019 by Andy Wheeler

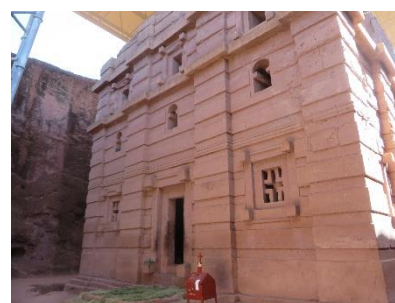
An opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to Ethiopia to see the ancient Orthodox churches was too good to miss. It was the trip of a lifetime to journey step by step to Lalibela, the “Canterbury” of the Ethiopia Church, to see the famous Timkat celebration of the baptism of Christ. And to cap it all, to be guided by Bishop Andrew Proud, formerly the area bishop for Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa in the Diocese of Egypt.

In recent years I had visited the Sudanese and Ethiopian congregations in the western Gambella region with Bishop Mouneer and Bishop Andrew. Now was an opportunity to visit churches that were established from way back in the 4th century – not as a random tourist wandering from sight to sight, but in a prayerful journey to the spiritual heart of the Ethiopian Church. Each day morning and evening we said Morning and Evening prayer using an English translation of Ethiopian Orthodox services. We used similar prayers when visiting local churches. And several times celebrated the Eucharist together at significant moments – perhaps most memorably on a high ledge overlooking the craggy hills of Tigre.



The itinerary – Gerahta in Tigre where the oldest rock-hewn churches are – on to Axum, the ancient capital of Ethiopia where the first young Greek missionaries witnessed to their faith, resulting in the conversion of the King, and the spread of Christianity into the community. From Axum to Gondar, with its many well-preserved castles and palaces, and churches rich with wall paintings, of saints and biblical scenes. On to Bahr Dar, Lake Tana and the island monasteries, and at last to Lalibela, amazing Lalibela.

Lalibela is renowned for its rock-hewn churches, built, reputedly by King Lalibela in the 12th century, though some are thought to be older. Astounding works of design, and imagination. Most of them are still places of active worship today. The Timkat celebration was stupendous – colourful, noisy, crowded. From all the churches, thousands thronged to the meeting ground. Many choirs accompanied the tabots, the model



representations, heavily shrouded, of the Ark of the Covenant, faithfully believed by Ethiopian Christians to be housed in a special sanctuary in Axum. The climax of the celebration, after a night of prayer and worship, is the commemoration of the baptism of Christ around a large cross-

shaped pool, followed by the invitation to everyone to renew their baptismal vows.



Water is sprinkled and hosed over the gathered crowds, until eventually hundreds throw themselves into the pool in baptismal re-enactment (whilst having a great time!).

All in all, a great reminder of the diversity of the Christian Church around the world, of the antiquity and vibrancy of the African Church, of the role of culture, for good and for ill, in shaping Christian faith and practice in every land.

Sadly COVID and the recent outbreak of military conflict in Ethiopia has, I imagine, brought opportunities to visit to a halt, with no hope of them being restored in the near future.

Andy Wheeler



CHRISTMAS IN ETHIOPIA *memories by Rosemary Burke who served in Ethiopia from 2009 to 2018, firstly working with Tearfund in Addis Ababa and then living in Gambela as General Secretary for the Episcopal Area of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa from 2014 to 2018 under Bishop Grant. She was a member of St Matthew's Addis Ababa. She recalls....*

We usually celebrated Christmas in Addis Ababa twice – once with Western friends on 25th December, and again with Ethiopian friends on 7th January, following the Orthodox Church calendar. For most Ethiopians 25th December was an unremarkable, ordinary working day so we drove to church through the bustling city. The choice of carols was appropriate for 28°C, so little about ‘amid the winter snow’ or ‘in the bleak mid-winter’! Then it was back for a feast of festive goodies that had been carefully collected on visits home and saved in the back of cupboards.

In Gambela the Nuer churches celebrated Christmas on the 25th December as had been their custom in Sudan, and the Anywaa on the 7th January in line with the rest of Ethiopia! On Christmas Eve,



whatever the date, there would be services into the night and then near midnight the Christmas drama would begin. It was usually outside because of the heat. The few lights were at the mercy of the electricity supply and the narrator held firmly on to the only microphone. It was a cross between a school nativity play and a pantomime. Gabriel was magnificent in a white sheet lit up by hand torches and the part of Mary went to one of the women who had given birth in the preceding weeks with her new-born, male or female, becoming the baby Jesus. King Herod was always big and fat, sweating because his girth was achieved by folded blankets and pillows tied tightly around him. The whole story was enacted so the murder of the innocents was included. I questioned this once and learned that for people who had seen war and violence of this kind perpetrated, it gave them a particular point of identification with the story. In a strange extra-biblical, morality tale twist, Herod got his come-uppance because when he died his belly burst open and his guts – all the blankets and

pillows – spilled out onto the ground. We wandered home at 2am having laughed and cried, having seen something new in an age-old story.



Finally, in this newsletter, a request from Bishop Bill – please help us increase our prayer base by contacting people you know who have a connection with churches in the Province - a suggested draft letter to send to potential new members follows:



Your name and address, email, telephone

Name of Recipient

Address

Dear....

I hope you ... personal intro

I am getting in touch specifically because of our shared interest in (Egypt Tunis....wherever..)

As a member of FAPA – the Friends of the Anglican Province of Alexandria – I am keen to generate more support for the Christian ministries in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti.

The church in the different countries of the Province is thriving and growing, despite the many challenges within the region. Faithful, prayerful support is the important factor, and I thought it would be good to share the news of this growth with friends who have lived in the region at some time, and might be glad to be informed, and to join us in prayer.

I invite you to visit the FAPA website www.fapa-egypt.org, learn more about us, and consider becoming a member. We keep in touch with members by regular newsletters and – in normal times – there is an annual gathering in London in June.

Please do get in touch if you would like to learn more!



www.fapa-egypt.org

