

PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, KITGUM DIOCESE, UGANDA

Report for Holy Trinity Sunningdale



AUTUMN 2016 REPORT

GREETINGS

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued prayers for the Diocese of Kitgum and our local churches currently going through PEP. We are seeing churches wake up to their potential and their mission to be salt and light in their communities. Later in this letter you can read some small stories of where God's kingdom is breaking through thanks to the change of heart in these congregations.

We would ask that you continue to pray for the health situation here in Uganda. Recently in the North there has been a polio outbreak and lots of cases of malaria. The government has responded by teaching people about the dangers of polio and encouraging them to get immunised. They have also been reiterating the importance of sleeping under a mosquito net to avoid malaria.

It has also been a difficult few months for those who are meeting in Savings and Loans groups. As you know these groups meet regularly to save money together and share fellowship. Sadly the rate of inflation may soon rise as high as 20%, so it is difficult to save a significant amount.

Thank you for your prayers and support over the past months. We have been so blessed by our partnership with you.

WHERE ARE WE?

1620 people, from 28 churches in the Diocese of Kitgum, are going through PEP. After the first foundational Bible studies, 70% of those 28 churches are engaged in wholehearted ministry. This looks different for each church and could mean an increase in church services and prayer groups, visiting the sick, or building better houses for church families.



19 of those 28 have successfully completed three sets of Bible studies: the foundational first set, the Resource Mobilisation Bible studies, and those on Relationship Building. These studies help the church realise God's purpose for them and how he longs for them to experience life in all its fulness. This starts with a change of heart, leading to spiritual growth and renewed relationships. People begin to see and use resources around them to bring material change to their families and community. The remaining nine have been slower to grasp these truths and need to do a little more work before they can progress to the next stage. The church leadership are pleased with the PEP process. We are blessed to see them working round the clock to help their churches become salt and light to their community.

OUTBREAKS OF THE KINGDOM

As we follow the churches of the Diocese of Kitgum through the PEP process, it is exciting to see how differently each church responds to the challenges in front of them. What follow are a few examples of the work the churches are up to!

At **Akobi Bipong Church** in Chua Archdeaconry, the youth group has banded together to help each other and elderly people in the community. They identified four elderly people whose houses were falling down. They rebuilt the houses for them. The young people have also started various agricultural activities to help them raise income. They have planted an acre of cabbages and aubergines and some members of the group are keeping bees.

At **Pederyam Pentecostal Church**, they have chosen to support vulnerable children and orphans in their church. They are paying the school fees of six children, as well as providing essential materials like school books and stationery.

At **Cum-Cum Church** in Kitgum Urban Archdeaconry, the church leadership spearheaded the fundraising of 13 million Ugandan Shillings (USH) (almost £3000) towards re-roofing the Church. Every church member was encouraged to contribute 50,000 or 100,000 (£10-£20) each. The roofing has been completed, and in addition they have fitted five new doors and fourteen windows.

At **Lugwar Lubene Church** they had decided that they could be most helpful to the community by building a nursery school. They have seen incredible provision in this project. One of the church members gave three acres of land to the church to build the school on. All the preliminary building materials were collected from the church members and a temporary structure has been built. 52 children have already been enrolled in the school.

At **Kitgum Matidi**, they learnt through the resource mobilisation Bible study that they could cover their most urgent needs themselves, without outside help. They had wanted for a long time to build a house for their church leader, so they began immediately! One church member offered an iron sheet and 50,000 USH. This encouraged other members to see what they could give.

They have begun building the house, and as you can see from the photo, they only have the roof left to go.



At **St Paul's Church** they have been visiting people in prisons. They have established a church in the prison, and recently the Bishop visited and confirmed 16 people. They have also started an outreach ministry to the local health centre. They make a special offering every month to buy soap for the centre.

At **Odoko Mit Church** they have been experiencing a revival of excitement for hearing the gospel. 211 people have given their lives to Christ and renewed their walk with Jesus.

At **Kazi Kazi Church** the Mothers' Union group has formed a farming group so they can support one another through agricultural projects. They clubbed together and bought seven goats for the group to share. They were also able to give part of the harvest of groundnuts and beans to the church as an offering.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

In the last six months we have learnt a lot about running a successful project with churches. Our main learning was that if the participants are well informed about the project, they would always support it in their churches. For example they supported the training by contributing food for the participants, something would have not done if they were not sure of the worth of the training.

We learnt that, if the churches are empowered through the process, they will invite believers from other nearby churches to attend the Bible studies. This is encouraging to see and will help contribute to the spread of PEP.

We have noticed that the PEP Bible studies have encouraged church members to work together across the churches in unity. They are sharing experiences, resources, and challenges. It has strengthened their relationships and bound them together in love.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Colossians 3:12-14

We were surprised to see how willing the local churches have been to contribute to the training sessions. Whether by bringing food, travelling a long way, or by housing those who have had to come further to attend the trainings. Normally churches expect charities to provide everything needed by a project. We are seeing a change of mindset and more local ownership of the project than usually happens.

ST PETER'S CHURCH, PATONGO

During the foundational Bible studies, the participants were asked to identify what the most urgent needs of the church were. They had a long list! It featured building a toilet for the church, building a house for the Catechist, renovating the church building, and starting a secondary school.

After they had made this list, the church leaders visited a more established PEP project in Soroti District. They saw the potential of what they could achieve, and were encouraged to begin a larger scale project. The senior church leaders then developed the vision of running the secondary school through the church.

The nearest schools were in Patongo Town and Agago District, quite far away for the local children to travel. So their aim is to bridge this gap, and make it easier for children to complete their education.

The secondary school was established and called the Barbra Rivera Memorial secondary school. The board of governance was established, 13 qualified teachers recruited, and 147 students have been enrolled in the school this year.

The church has resolved to give half scholarships to two students in senior one from the Local churches.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, PATONGO

The lay leader for St Paul's church lives over 13 kilometres away from the church. For a year now he has been coming from home to lead the service in Patongo as he did not have anywhere to stay. The church decided to build a house for him to stay in within the Parish. They established a Construction Committee and a building plan.

The first step is to raise funds from the church. They are encouraging everyone to contribute 5,000 Ugandan Shillings or more if they are able. When they thought about what resources they had already, they realised that they could roof the house with eucalyptus trees. One church member also promised to provide iron sheets for the house, and the church members volunteered their time to build it.



As you can see from the photo, they have already made a good start on the walls.

ST LUKE'S CHURCH, MADI OPEI

Madi Opei is one of the greatest and oldest churches in the Diocese of Kitgum. And yet for over 20 years the church has been struggling to start construction of a new church building. Time and again, resources were collected but they could not get the impetus to start the building and the resources were wasted.

After the church envisioning and awakening through the foundational Bible studies, the church resolved to unite and revive the church through forgiveness and unity. As part of this the church began to start again with their dreams of rebuilding the church together.

650, 000 Ugandan Shillings were raised to start the foundations, along with a goat, four chickens and four bags of sand. A committee for church construction was established to monitor the construction of the church and keep track of all the resources needed.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for those churches who need to go through the foundational principles of PEP again, that this time God would open their minds and hearts.
- Pray for those church leaders who are finding it difficult to enthuse their congregation, that God would send his spirit to stir up people's hearts.
- God has healed many broken hearts and relationships through these Bible studies, but there remains some division. Please ask for God to heal relationships in our Diocese.
- There is often an attitude of dependency in the churches, and they expect someone to come and pull them out of their problems. Pray that God would destroy this attitude, and give them confidence in the plan he has for them.
- Pray for peace in our country, especially in those areas near South Sudan where there is a civil war currently.
- Ask God that Uganda's economy would stabilise, as the high inflation rate is difficult for everyone, but especially the poorest.

Thank you!