



SAGALEE ABDII

A Periodical Newsletter of Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church

Issue #1

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SAGALEEN ABDII EESSAA ARGAMA?

Namni nyaataa fi bishaan dhabee guyyaa yartuu jiraachuu danda'a jedhamee yaadama. Garuu namni abdiidha dhabee guyyaa muraasa jiraachuun ulfaataadha. Nama amantii ta'es ta'uu baatus guyyaa guyyaatti kan jireenya namaa gegeessu abdiidha. Namni abdiidha kan irra kaa'atu waan garaagaraa irra ha ta'u iyyuu malee yeroo gabaabaa yookiis dhheeraafis yoo ta'e kan yaada isaa qabbaneessu barbaada. Namani dhukkubatii fayyuu in abdata. Iyuma isaa keessaa ba'uuf in abdata. Haala garaagaraa rakkisaa ta'e keessa ba'uuf namni in abdata. Nama ofi ajjeesuu murteesseef daqiiqaa shaman inni jalqabaa akka inni ofi ajjeesuuf yookis dhiisuuf murteessaadha jedhamee yaadama. Sagaleen abdiidha daqiiqaa muraasa sana keessatti nama barbbadu sanaff kennamu seenaa namichaa jijjiiruu danda'a. Egaa nui kiristaannonni sagalee abdiidha kana kenninee rakkina isa ammaa akkasumas rakkina isa du'a booda dhufus nama oolchuuf biyya lafaa keessa jirra.

Namni, kan isa toosisu(jajjabeessu) fi kan karaa isa agarsiisee jireenyi isa fuula dura jiru abdachiisaa ta'uu isaa kan isaaf mirkaneessu bara hundumaa in barbaada. Beekaanis wal'aalaanis akkasuuma soressaa fi iyeesis in barbaadu. Harri'a biyya- lafaa keessa si gorsinee karraa jireenyaa si agarsiifna kan jedhan baayyeedha. Gorsa kana argaachuufis namooti horii baayyee baasu. Hata'u malee, yeroo baayyee akka abdatan ta'uu dida. Erga akkas ta'ee, Sagaleen abdiidha inni dhugaan eessaa argamaree? Sagaleen abdiidha inni barri itti in darbine sagalee waaqayyoo keessa jira. Kiristiyaannonni immoo warra dura bu'anii sagalee misiraachoo kana biyya-lafaatti himaniidha.

Dawit bara dheeraa dura "...yaa lubbuu ko ,maaliif akkas gadditee dhiphata?...ati **waaqayyoon abdiidhan eeggadhu**" jedhee ofii isaatti dubbate (Far.42:5). Abdiidha kan inni dhufu waaqayyoo biraa akka ta'e ofii isaatti hima. Abdiidha ijoollee waaqayyoo burqaan isaa waaqayyoodha. Abdiidha isaa kan bara hundumaa ti kan nama hundumaatis. Phawulos, waan hafanii jiraatan

Continues on page 2

Editorial Note A New Beginning

Spring is a time of new beginnings. For us spring follows a very cold and long Minnesota winter. The changes in spring herald the end of winter and bring signs of hope and new life around us: plants and trees sprout leaves and flowers blossom. Spring is also a time of hope and joy when we celebrate the resurrection of our savior who died for us so that we might live.

For Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church, spring reflects a time of new life, hope, and joy. We are in this new journey with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



In this new journey we have already seen how God's breath of fresh air is reviving our congregation. This is exemplified in worship, genuine love for God and for one another, shared vision and responsibility, unity of purpose and vision, respect and love for our pastor, and in sharing one another's joy and burden. It is also shown in the weekly time joy and of thanksgiving for the sharing of the gospel and life together as Oromo Christians in diaspora.

When the Apostle Paul was on a journey to Rome he had only one purpose and one mission. The promise was that he would be Christ's witness in Rome (Acts 23:11). He was on a mission but the mission was not his own. A church does not have a mission but exists

A New Beginning (cont.)

to fulfill the mission of God, *Missio Dei*. And the mission lives on because God is!

On his journey to fulfill God's mission – to be His witness in Rome – Paul faced very difficult and life threatening challenges. He was arrested, beaten, persecuted, ridiculed, hungry, cold, faced tribulations at sea, ship wrecked, . . . yet he did not lose hope. He knew that his mission was not to go and die at sea but to witness in Rome.

As Christians we face many challenges in our lives and in the life of our congregation. However, we believe that the rock of our salvation is our anchor in the storms that come to us in our personal and congregational life. We have already seen the Lord's delivering hand when He anchored us in the storms.

This new journey has also brought us back to a culture of appreciation and respect for leaders, which for a while has been disregarded. Members initiated and raised money in a short period of time to prepare a special appreciation day to celebrate our pastor's service. The congregation showed its appreciation by giving pastor Melkamu and his wife a ten-day tour of the Holy Land. Furthermore, to host the 17th annual UOEC conference, members raised money in a matter of four weeks surpassing the goal set by the organizing committee. Indeed, we are witnessing a "new thing" in our church.

Sagalee Abdii newsletter is also a new thing in our church history which has never had its own newsletter in the past. The purpose of this newsletter is to share what God is doing in the life of our congregation. It takes our communication method to a new level. *Sagalee Abdii* is periodical newsletter available online and in print. We invite you to read it, participate in it, send your comments, and share with others. In this first edition, we take the opportunity to welcome you to our church and to the Twin Cities as you arrive to participate in the **2012 UOEC conference**.

"I have set before an open door, and no one can shut." Rev. 3:8

**Our Redeemer Oromo
Evangelical Church welcomes you
to the 17th Annual UOEC
Conference**

When: July 5 – 8, 2012

**Where: 4000 28th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA**



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keessa inni tokko "abdi" akka ta'e dubbate(1Qor.13:13).Gooftaa Yesus Kiristos Naziretitti hojii isaa yommuu jalqabe sagalee abdi kanaan afaan isaa saaqate."...**sagalee misiraachoo warra gadadamootti himuudhaaf na dibeera**" jedhe(Luq.4:18). Bara hundumaa , sagaleen abdi(misiraachoo) waaqayyo biraa dhufa. Harri'as jireenyi namaa karaa baayeedhaan waan ofi danda'e itti ha fakaatu malee dhuma irraatti harka waaqayyoo keessatti kufa.

Inni immoo ijoollee isaa warra isa abdatan qophaatti isaan hin dhiisu. "...**garuu ani deebi'ee isinan arga ,garaan keesani in gammada, gammachuu keesani eenyu illee isin duraa fudhatu...**"(Yoha.16:22) jedhee bartoota isaa warra garaan isaanii gadde jajjabeesse. Sagaleen waaqayyoo jajjabinaa fi sagalee abdiitiin guutuudha. Egaa burqaa sagalee abdi isa erga ta'ee, Kiristos irra ijaa keenya ha kaa'annu. Kiristos keessaa ala abdi dhugaan in argamu. Karaan, dhugaanii fi jireenyi ana inni jedhe(Yoha.14:6) waan nu barbaachisu hundumaa qaba.

Caafati waldaa keenyaa yerootii gara yerootii ba'u kun mata duree garaagaraa jalatti sagalee abdi kana irraa dedeebi'ee akka nu yaadachiisuuf yaadame. Maxxansa "**Sagalee Abdi**" jedhamuudhaan nuu qophaa'e kana ha simannu, ha dubbifnu ,keessattis qooda ha fudhannu.

Caafata qophaa'u kanaan waaqayyoo hunduma keenya ha eebbisu akkasumas warra kana keessatti yeroo isaanii fi beekumsa isaanii kennanii itti dadhabaniif ha kadhannu.

Sagaleen abdi kana fudhachuu in dagatinaa!
Luba waldaa irraa.

The Journey of Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church

Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word (Acts 8: 4)

In the book of Acts we read how the Gospel began to spread and how the followers of Jesus Christ faced unprecedented persecution. After the martyrdom of Stephen the followers of Jesus were forced to disperse out into the unknown lands. This dispersal served as a spring board for the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the gentiles. It was the beginning of the Great commission as ordered by the Lord as written in Matthew 28: 19-20.

During the last thirty years, Oromo people settled throughout the USA with the largest settlement being in Minnesota, estimated to be over twenty thousand. In 1986, Oromo Christian families and other individuals formed a weekly house prayer and Bible study program, and eventually started holding Sunday afternoon services at the Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Although the majority of the worshipers came from the Mekane Yesus tradition, the fellowship brought people from different Christian denominations. Later on, the fellowship was offered a place of worship by the Bethany Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.



The Oromo Lutheran church in Minnesota was formally organized and registered under Minnesota State law in 1995. The congregation later joined the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and became its member congregation in 1995. The year was also marked by the arrival of the first pastor of the congregation, Pastor Melkamu Negeri and his family, who began serving the congregation. Although his status was part-time, yet he provided full time services. It was

out of this humble and faithful beginning that the church grew.

From the very beginning, the church had its own uniquely special status within the wider ELCA church body. Thus, nominates and remunerates its own pastor and does not follow the regular call process which other ELCA congregations follow. For example, when the congregation decided to change its name to Oromo Evangelical Church of Minnesota in 2005 to reflect its multi-denominational nature, no challenge or complaint were made from the ELCA. Once again this name was changed in 2007 to Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church in appreciation and recognition of mortgage the free building gift by the former Our Redeemer Lutheran Church.



The annual budget of the congregation grew from nearly eighteen thousand in 1995 to over two hundred thousand by 2007. The records depict that contribution of members covered about 82% of total expenditure of the congregation until 2002. However, the Oromo congregation remained financially independent since 2002. In all these facts, we observe the goodness of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit along this challenging journey.

This Church has gone through different challenges. Even so, by the power of the Spirit and strong commitment of the faithful it remained a place of gathering for Oromo people to provide and receive holistic service. What happened in early 2012 is just part of the many challenges that we go through as participants in God's mission, *Missio Dei*. We are neither the mission nor are we makers of mission but only participants in God's mission.

Our church is a missional church, and we are

expected to focus on mission rather than maintenance of existing affairs, teach members to be disciples rather than members. It empowers lay people, focuses on others and the world rather than stick only with those who are there already within the four walls of the Church but reach out the unreached irrespective of diversities.

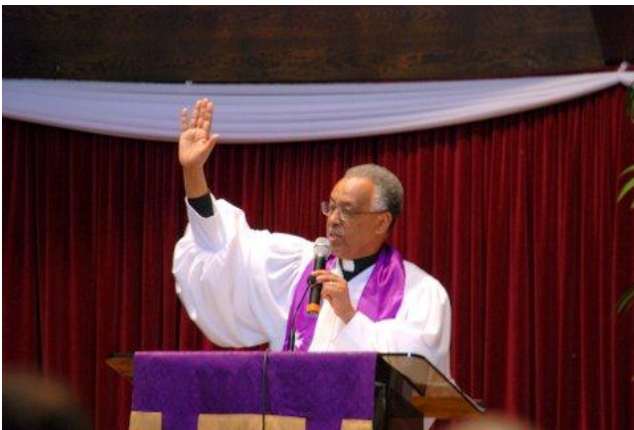
As a missional church we are also focusing on programs for our second generation. The continuous supply of first generation immigrants might not continue for long. On the other hand the second generations are demanding from us to find ways to increase their involvement in Church life. As children of God, Oromo Church is called to proclaim the Gospel without hesitation, be a voice for the voiceless and be a beacon of light and hope for all.

Celebrations

Pastor Appreciation Day

“And now, friends, we ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!” 1 Thessalonians 5:12 (The Message Bible)

The month of October is known in churches in this country as pastor appreciation month. However, this tradition has not been accepted or practiced in our congregation. After God freed us from the unnecessary internal conflict the number one priority in every member’s mind was to publicly acknowledge and appreciate our pastor’s leadership and selfless service to our congregation during the past several years.



Accordingly, few individuals came together at their own initiation and began planning the event. The

group held several meetings to discuss how to engage the entire congregation to honor our pastor, Pastor Melkamu Negeri, for his service to our church for over the past sixteen years with unparalleled passion and dedication. The group worked very hard to collect ideas and money from members to come up with the best gift that can represent his excellent service.

This special pastoral appreciation day took place immediately following church service on April 29, 2012. Women of the church prepared delicious traditional Oromo foods including Buddeena and Itto. The program was filled with praise songs, poetry, drama, and testimonies from some congregation members.

After gathering ideas from members, the organizing committee decided to honor and appreciate Pastor Melkamu’s service by awarding him and his wife, Adde Ebbise, ten days tour of the Holy Land. The tour package includes transportation, lodging, and food for both of them. In addition, the group also presented Pastor Melkamu with a \$2000 valued gold chain with cross brought directly from Oromia. Pastor Melkamu thanked the congregation and said that a trip to the Holy Land has been his lifetime dream.

Along with pastor Melkamu, Adde Masresha Gemechu, was also recognized for her faithful service as Youth and Children ministry coordinator and office administrator. In addition, Mr. Lloyd Thompson, custodian of the church, was recognized for his superb service of cleaning the church. Both Adde Masresha and Mr. Llyod also received honorary gifts in appreciation of their service.

Mother’s Day



Special mother’s day celebration was conducted at Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church on May 13, 2012, as a gesture of honoring motherhood.

The British statesman Lord Shaftesbury once said: “Give me a generation of Christian mothers, and I will undertake to change the whole face of society in twelve months.” This truly depicts members of Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church, who are honorable mothers, sisters, and grand parents

For the occasion an ad hoc committee composed of “men only” prepared delicious and aromatic authentic Oromo dishes such as Buddena with Itto Hoolaa. The men only group, organized by the Young Adults ministry, traveled several miles to purchase *hoolaa* and prepare it church.

In addition, the committee also prepared a drama called “Allaaf Manaan” with the objective of honoring mothers. The men formed their own instant “Kitchen Choir” and echoed songs praise expressing their gratitude for motherhood. The atmosphere in the kitchen was filled with an aura of joy and warmth.

During the mothers’ day celebration, two poems were read, whose contents expressed the selfless and immeasurable love mothers have for their children, and the sacrifices they pay to raise them. Red roses were given to each mother and grandmother as a token of love, gratitude and respect.

The Mothers’ Day program of this year contained a special event of honoring “Mother of the Year.” Thus, the organizing committee nominated Adde Aster Namara as the most eligible candidate. She received a special gift from Mr. Ephraim Olani, President of Our Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church.

The program functioned as a source of joy and immensely contributed to the unity of our church members, cherished our culture and conveyed the message that we can overcome difficult circumstances if we stand in unison.

Father’s Day

Father’s Day was celebrated in a similar fashion on June 17, 2012. This time the women only group secretly organized a surprise party to celebrate the day. Men were told of this surprise party at the end of our regular worship.

The women prepared delicious “Marqaa” (Oromo porridge) topped with traditionally spiced yogurt, collard green, and ground jalapeño, and Buddena with Itto, *Qoccoo*, *Foon Dheedhii*, salad, and bread to name just a few. This was, of course, topped with *Cungoo* and a cup of Oromo coffee roasted and made fresh right in the kitchen. The women also formed their own instant “Kitchen Choir” and served lunch while



singing songs praise.

The celebrations reflect the joy, genuine love, and respect for one another as expressed by each person in our church. As Psalm 133 says, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!”

Picnic and Graduations

Immediately after the worship was concluded on Sunday, July 09, 2012, congregants of the Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church had a social gathering at the Minnehaha Park, which is located in close proximity to the church. A total of approximately one hundred people came together an afternoon of fun, relaxation, playing different kinds of games and enjoying delicious foods brought in from home and also prepared on the spot.

The spirit of God blessed the gathering with a pleasant weather condition, an atmosphere of peace and joy.

The occasion was also used to celebrate the graduation ceremony of Oromo students from various institutions of learning. Altogether, there were 35 students who graduated from primary schools, middle and high schools as well as colleges and universities. Amongst these, ten students achieved the Honor list of their respective schools, while two students earned the Doctor of Medicine Degrees. Two more graduated with the M.Sc. Degrees and one student earned as Associate Degree. A total of seven students completed high schools.

For further information about our church and more pictures, please visit our website: www.oroec.org.

Youth and Children Ministry

This ministry has continued to grow with the support of volunteers from the family and education committee teaching Biblical stories and Oromo Language and Qube writing. The ministry is coordinated by Children and youth ministry coordinator and three support staff who are paid on the basis of the days of their service with the youth and Children. Those teenagers who did not participate in Confirmation classes are being thought by the support staff.

God has continued to bless us with children and we thank God for their parents who are making their at most effort to involve their kids in Church to be part of Oromo community in spite of English becoming the language of this second generation.