

Groveport Presbyterian Church's worship items find a new home

By [Editor Columbus Messenger](#)

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By Rick Palsgrove, Groveport Editor



After 168 years, the Groveport Presbyterian Church congregation held its last service in July, but some of the church's worship items have found a new home in Sierra Leone with the helping hand of the Groveport United Methodist Church.

"Magnus Jusu, who is from Sierra Leone, came to the United States shortly after the civil war in that country," said Groveport United Methodist Church Pastor Jonathan Mann. "He came here to train as a trauma counselor to help people in his country heal after the effects of war. However, his home was destroyed during the war, and he needed to stay and work in the U.S. to provide for his wife and son. That was 16 years ago. He is also an ordained pastor in the Sierra Leone Conference of the United Methodist Church. Magnus has had many jobs over the 16 years in the U.S., but he now works as a custodian at the Groveport Madison High School as well as a custodian at our church. We are pursuing getting his credentials from Sierra Leone recognized here in the United States so he may one day get to serve as a pastor again."

Mann asked Jusu if there was anything the churches in Sierra Leone could use.

“He said Bibles, hymnals, pretty much anything for worship,” said Mann. “I announced from the pulpit one Sunday if anyone knew of a bunch of Bibles or hymnals we could send we would be happy to do it. Jean Ann Hilbert, one of our church members, called Margaret Ann Cottrill, one of the members of Groveport Presbyterian Church. It turned out the Presbyterian church had all sorts of worship items they wanted to give to the churches in Sierra Leone. About 20 members of our church went to Groveport Presbyterian and picked up the items they wanted to donate and brought them back to our church.”

According to Mann, Jusu coordinated the shipment of church items to Sierra Leone.

“We (Groveport United Methodist Church) are paying to ship all the items,” said Mann. “While the final amount is pending, I estimate the bill to be about \$1,200.”

When asked why the Groveport United Methodist Church wanted to help with the donations, Mann said, “Our church has gotten to know Magnus these past couple of years and we dearly love him. Our church has a history of helping people and families in this part of the world.”

He noted the Groveport United Methodist Church has an ongoing Liberian Scholarship which supports schooling for children in Liberia, has helped bring over a couple of church members’ families from Liberia, and intends to help Magnus bring his wife and son over as well.

“For us, this is another way to fulfill the Lord’s command to love one another,” said Mann.

The Groveport Presbyterian Church items being donated to the Sierra Leone churches include Bibles, hymnals, choir robes, an advent wreath, bronze items used for worship such as candle lighters and candle holders, children’s books for Sunday School and lessons, and sheet music.

“Magnus is still considered a United Methodist pastor in Sierra Leone,” said Mann. “We knew through his contacts that churches would receive the items donated and they would be put to good use.”

Mann said the project has been “a truly wonderful experience to see new life given to these items of worship” and he attended the Groveport Presbyterian Church’s final worship service in July.

“There was a deep feeling of sadness to see Groveport Presbyterian’s mission come to completion,” said Mann. “When news got to me that the Presbyterian congregation wanted to send through us its worship items to churches in Sierra Leone, I felt great joy. In many ways it felt like a mini resurrection in seeing God bring something good out of something so sad. When the church is able to come together despite denominations, geography, language, and ethnicity, it becomes one of the most fulfilling events in one’s life. To see such good come from working together is such a blessing.”

On Aug. 29, the Groveport United Methodist Church held a worship service and invited members of the Groveport Presbyterian congregation. During that service the items being sent to Sierra Leone were dedicated and Presbyterian members went to the altar to lay hands on those items.

“There were many tears, but also joy to see God continue to work with what is given to him,” said Mann. “One of my biggest memories from the day was that they had given us a beautiful altar cloth that was special to them. It was from their sister church in Thailand that was specially made for them. I remember thinking, a church in Thailand made an altar cloth for the Presbyterian Church which was now being used and passed onto us. At the same time, we are dedicating worship items from the Presbyterian Church to be sent to Sierra Leone. In that moment I felt the mutual reciprocity and love that is shared with brothers and sisters in the faith.”