

**South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship**  
**Taskforce Committee Report**

Committee Members:

Elder Bruce Huebner    Chair Person

Elder Lyn Lloyd-Smith

Rev. Margaret Walls

Rev. Nathan Byrd

**Committee's Assigned Task:**

Review the health and vitality of the South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship and to prepare a written report that will include a summary of the findings and any recommendations.

# **South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship**

## **Taskforce Committee Report**

### **Outline**

- 1. A brief history of the South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship.**
- 2. South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship Today**
- 3. Financials**
- 4. Possible Options**
- 5. Recommendation**

## **History of the South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship**

In 1956 civil war broke out in Sudan that took millions of lives and forced many refugees into camps. In 1985 the United Nations began to relocate many of these Sudanese refugees into permanent locations throughout the world. Several thousand of these refugees relocated to San Diego County. By 1990 the Sudanese Christians began to gather for worship in local churches. In 1997 Faith Presbyterian Church hosted Sudanese within their congregation. In 2000 the Presbytery of San Diego voted to build a building to house a separate Sudanese American Presbyterian Church on part of the property previously occupied by the East San Diego Presbyterian Church. In 2002 Pastor Peter Lual began to shepherd this newly formed fellowship of 150 - 170 in the new facility built for them, described by Rev. Paul Pulliam as a “cultural home in a foreign land”. Leaving Sudan had hurt their hearts, but the congregation was and is honored to worship, live, and work in the United States.

Over the past 14 years Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship has been funded by generous donations from various churches within the Presbytery and in a smaller part by the donations from the Fellowship. As donations from the various churches began to decrease, there was an effort to find a group to lease some of the facility for their activities. UrbanLife leased the 5202 Orange Ave. property in 2012 for 4 days per week for their youth programs and their “Farm” program. This lease contributed about 40% of the annual operating expenses of the property which helped keep the budget in the black until 2016. Beginning in 2017, UrbanLife will reduce their use of the facility thus the income will be reduced which will impact the budget going forward.

There has been a small steering committee in place to help the Sudanese manage the issues of their church and this property. Over the years, this committee has provided both functional and spiritual guidance to the Sudanese as they integrated into the San Diego area.

The Republic of South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011. The Congregation is made up of people from the Republic of South Sudan thus there is a desire to be referred to as the South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship. (SSAPF)

## **South Sudanese American Fellowship Today**

The South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship is led by William Tut, who has been in the San Diego area for about 20 years. William has been a lay preacher since 1979. He was trained as a Commissioned Ruling Elder by taking Dubuque Seminary's online course. He works as a security guard "to put food on the table", but has a deep desire to be able to devote more time discipling others, especially the youth in his congregation.

The Fellowship consists of about 200 people. (2014 data but according to Rev. Tut it is very close to the same today). This is broken down into: 22 Families, 40 adult men, 48 adult women, 62 children and 45 youth. The congregation lives in many different areas of San Diego. The working age adults are all employed.

Church activities take place on weekends; Friday nights, Saturdays, and most of the day on Sunday. The women meet on some Friday evenings. William teaches on some Saturdays and Session also meets on designated Saturdays. Sunday after church a men's Bible study is led by either William or retired pastor Peter Lual. The women prepare lunch and visit with each other while the children play. Each Christmas they invite all the Sudanese in San Diego to celebrate with them.

The congregation worships in the Nuer language. The younger generations are not fluent in Nuer. Plans are being developed for an English language service which would be led by William's son, Buay Deng Tut, a UCSD graduate student. A female student at PLNU, Nyamal Christ, is working with William's son, Buay, on this effort.

The annual budget and financial requirement for the Fellowship is approximately \$45,000 per year. UrbanLife has just renewed their lease for utilizing the property 2 days per week as well as use of the “Farm” area. An effort is underway to sign a lease with the Uplift organization for ½ day per week for one of their child tutoring programs resulting in a total for both leases of \$10-12,000 per year of income. Churches in the Presbytery donate about \$8,000 per year to the Fellowship and the congregation donates about \$10,000 per year. The congregation’s generosity to family members in Africa impacts their ability to support their local church. Members of the Fellowship are pained by what is happening in South Sudan. They support those in the refugee camps in Ethiopia and Uganda. It is more difficult to send money to those in South Sudan, except for those in Juba, the capital.

There is an additional funding requirement of \$12-15,000 per year. This is a “barebones” budget with no extras and does not include any monies for reserves. Therefore, any repairs or maintenance requirements would be additions to this shortfall. (See attached Financials for 2016 and a proforma budget for 2017)

Bruce Huebner has met with most of the leaders of the South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship and found them to be a committed, caring, and responsible Christian group of men who very much want their Church to succeed. They are all proud of the fact that they have their own Church building and location to call home for themselves and their families where they can continue their faith journey with God.

## **Possible Options that were considered:**

1. Continue the Current Support at the 5202 Orange Ave. Property:  
The Presbytery would continue to support the current situation at the 5202 Orange Ave. Property. The South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship (SSAPF) would continue to be the primary tenant. The Presbytery, through the SSAPF Steering committee, would support and facilitate a more active role by the South Sudanese in the management of their church and this property. i.e., direct budget management, facilities management, property management, etc. The Presbytery and the Steering Committee would continue to seek out and support shared use of the property that will generate addition income through lease agreement. The Presbytery, the Steering Committee and the South Sudanese will remain active in soliciting financial support for the SSAPF from other churches. The Presbytery will support any shortfall in the annual budget up to a maximum of \$20K per year. This option will be reviewed annually to decide on continue funding or to pursue other options. The current budget does not include any monies for major repair or up keep or for establishing any reserves for this property.

2. Designate a new Church to be planted at the Orange Ave. Property.

The Presbytery would designate the Orange Ave. property as a site where a new church would be planted. All financial support from the Presbytery would be utilized to support this building and property and the newly planted church. Rental income from the “Farm” would go directly to the Presbytery to support the property. The SSAPF would then nest at this location with this newly planted church. All SSAPF donations and other church financial support would be utilized to support their church. The SSAPF would no longer be the primary tenant on this property thus they would have to be subordinate to the newly planted church and its schedules.

3. Relocate the South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship to a rental property.

The Orange Ave. Property would be sold. After the sale and before closing, the SSAPF would be moved to a rental property that is leased by the Presbytery for up to \$50K per year (includes utilities) for up to 10 years. These rental fees would come from proceeds from the sale of the 5202 Orange Ave. property. Any congregational donations of the SSAPF and other churches financial support would provide additional to support the SSAPF church on an annual basis.



## **Taskforce Recommendation:**

### **We recommend Option 1 as follows:**

1. Continue the Current Support at the 5202 Orange Ave. Property:  
The Presbytery would continue to support the current situation at the 5202 Orange Ave. Property. The South Sudanese American Presbyterian Fellowship (SSAPF) would continue to be the primary tenant. The Presbytery, through the SSAPF Steering committee, would support and facilitate a more active role by the South Sudanese in the management of their church and this property. i.e., direct budget management, facilities management, property management, etc. The Presbytery and the Steering Committee would continue to seek out and support shared use of the property that will generate addition income through lease agreement. The Presbytery, the Steering Committee and the South Sudanese will remain active in soliciting financial support for the SSAPF from other churches. The Presbytery will support any shortfall in the annual budget up to a maximum of \$20K per year. This option will be reviewed annually to decide on continue funding or to pursue other options. The current budget does not include any monies for major repair or up keep or for establishing any reserves for this property.

## **Tactical Actions:**

1. Strengthen the Steering Committee by adding members from the Presbytery. Chairman Rev. Nathan Byrd and Pastor William Tut will be joined by Commissioned Ruling Elders Bruce Huebner and Gordon Luke and Rev. Margaret Walls and Rev. Ray Sparling.
2. Continue to support the ongoing ministry of SSAPF at the Orange Avenue property, while facilitating a more active role by the South Sudanese in the management of SSAPF, i.e., direct budget management, facilities management, property management, etc. Significant efforts towards self-management of the SSAPF will be expected. The Presbytery and the Steering Committee will continue to seek out and support shared use of the property and other options for generating additional income for SSAPF and this property location. The Presbytery, the Steering Committee and the SSAPF will remain active in soliciting financial support for the SSAPF from other churches. The Presbytery will be asked to continue to support any shortfall in the annual budget for 2017 up to a maximum of \$15,000. The amount of the “not-to-exceed” financial support will be reviewed and re-established on an annual basis. The amount of this support could range from \$15-20K annually. Any major property repairs for the property would require additional funding by the Presbytery.
3. In addition, the SSAPF and the Steering Committee will develop a vision for the future of the SSAPF and establish goals that will continue in the sincere efforts of the SSAPF to build strong disciples of Jesus Christ while, at the same time, developing plans to reach the next generation as well as developing an outward focus.

**Individuals contacted  
during the review process.**

1. Rev. Michael Mudgett
2. Rev. Chris Lenocker
3. Rev. Ray Sparling
4. Rev. William Tut
5. Rev. Nathan Byrd (Subsequently added to the Taskforce)
6. Paul and Ruth Pulliam
7. South Sudanese Steering Committee
8. Peter Gach, member of the South Sudanese Congregation

**Documents Reviewed**

1. Early Documents that dated back to Jan. 1,1995 from Rev. Lual
2. Early Documents from the Faith Presbyterian Church Mission and Stewardship Committee dating back to March, 2001 related to the funding for the Church building project and its funding.