

A Long Walk to the Water of Life



The Risen Savior cheerleaders at the final tournament of the season last year. Go Knights!

One Africa Team and the Pastoral

Studies Institute are partnering to serve the spiritual needs of refugees from the Nuer tribe of South Sudan currently living in camps located in Ethiopia and Kenya. This week read how WELS members in Mankato, Minnesota are reaching out to Nuer immigrants in their community.

Christmas

blessings to you from Risen Savior Lutheran School in Mankato, Minnesota! We rejoice with you this holiday season as we celebrate Christ's birth and His coming for all mankind.

Risen Savior

Lutheran School (RSLs), a WELS Christian day school in south central Minnesota, continues to grow in God's grace.

Operated by St. Mark in Mankato and St. Paul's in North Mankato, Risen Savior exists to teach children God's message of salvation found in His Holy Word. Nine of our 92 students enrolled

are the children of South Sudanese refugees.

Our student body is blessed to call these students from four families
our brothers and sisters and friends in Christ.

These

Sudanese parents have moved to America to experience a better life for
themselves and their children. Although
they have escaped the ravaging of political war and the poverty and
displacement of refugee camps, life is still anything but easy. Five of the children
come from single parent
homes. The jobs parents get often
require long, overnight hours. These
families are in poverty in America and live with government assistance for food
and housing.

With the

conditions of their new life in America, these families must often rely on other
friends to help them raise their children.

Parents at Risen Savior also become a pillar of support, so these
Sudanese children can take part in the same activities that their new friends are
doing at school. You can see the faith
of these Sudanese parents as they allow their children to be transported with
American parents they often do not know, so their children can participate in
extracurricular events with friends.

In October RSLs

held an All-School Read event. All
families were given a copy of "A Long Walk to Water" by Linda Sue Park. We then
gathered to have a book discussion
about this Sudanese refugee's true story and the need for simple things like
clean water in Sudan. Children and
parents attended to learn more about this situation and to even enjoy a feast
of traditional food prepared by two of the Sudanese moms. One of the Sudanese
moms, Mary, worked all
day, prepared a dish of meat and rice to share and then attended to help

educate our school body about her experiences in her home country.



Nyeriang presents her winning poetry to a packed church as part of Risen Savior's annual forensics night.

At the end

of October our school held its annual forensics night. All students prepared a poem to present to families

of the school. One of our Sudanese

students, Nyeriang, received the highest score in her classroom's competition. Her family was working and

unable to attend but another family picked her up so she could do the honor of showcasing her poetry to those in attendance.

She showed much courage in public speaking and such growth from when she first attended Risen Savior four years ago.

The Sudanese

students are like their American friends and want to participate in the sports our school offers. Friday, a fifth

grader, received rides to practices and games when she played soccer this September. And now Kon gets rides home from cheerleading

practices and Friday, Nyeriang, Nyanak and Hannah get rides so they can play

for the Risen Savior girls' basketball team.

We are now preparing to celebrate Jesus' birth with our Advent concert. Practicing for this beautiful event, filled with recitations and songs by the students, takes special practices at an area church. These special practices mean extra rides that Sudanese families cannot give. Pastor Keith Siverly of St. Mark will often transport some students there, as will other school families. With this extra effort and commitment, our school will all glorify God together this season.



The entire student body of RSLs presents the joy of Jesus in our Advent concert

We work together; we learn from each other; we share the same faith. Please pray for the South Sudanese at Risen Savior and their adaptation to life here. Please also pray for the American families at Risen Savior that they

will not grow weary of doing good. We
are blessed to share this life in America with our Sudanese friends and we
await sharing life in heaven with them as well!

*Jenni Heins serves as a Teacher at
Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Mankato, MN.*

*Please pray for those working in
fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news
and receive updates. Go to this link to learn more about our mission fields in
Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts
<https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>*