

Report: Lutheran Church of the Sudan (LCSS)

Comprehensive Review of 2026 Growth, Ministry, and Impact

Growth and Expansion in 2026

The Lutheran Church of the Sudan (LCSS) experienced significant progress in 2026, marked by spiritual renewal, outreach, and community development. Through intentional evangelism, the church expanded its reach, welcoming seven new congregations across East Africa. This achievement demonstrates the dedication of leadership and members, as well as the guiding hand of God in every step of their mission. The new congregations have invigorated local communities, provided spiritual support to displaced populations, and strengthened the Lutheran presence throughout the region.

New Congregations

South Sudan

1. **Kondial Lutheran Church** – Situated in Juba, the dynamic capital city of South Sudan, Kondial Lutheran Church stands as a testament to resilience and faith. This well-established congregation joined the Lutheran Church of the Sudan (LCSS) after transitioning from another Lutheran church body, bringing with it its own dedicated facility, experienced pastor, and strong leadership team. Boasting a thriving community of over 300 active members, Kondial Lutheran Church has become a vital spiritual and social hub within Protection of Civilian site 3 (POC3)—a camp in the heart of Juba that offers sanctuary to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) affected by conflict and instability.

The church plays a crucial role in offering hope, spiritual nourishment, and practical support to individuals and families navigating hardship and uncertainty. As a cornerstone of worship and community development in POC3, Kondial Lutheran Church provides not only regular services but also a safe space for fellowship, counseling, and outreach programs designed to uplift the most vulnerable.

While the formal ownership of the church building is still under negotiation, the congregation remains steadfast in its commitment to service. To further strengthen its ministry and enhance the worship experience, Kondial Lutheran Church is seeking a monthly stipend of \$100 to support its pastor. In addition, a one-time investment of \$3,000 for musical instruments is requested, which will enrich both worship and community gatherings, fostering unity and deepening the congregation's spiritual life.

Through these efforts, Kondial Lutheran Church continues to be a beacon of faith, compassion, and resilience for IDPs and the wider community in Juba, embodying the mission and vision of the LCSS throughout South Sudan.

2. **Pagak Lutheran Church** – Situated in Pagak, South Sudan, approximately 40 miles west of Gambella, Pagak Lutheran Church represents a powerful resurgence of faith following more than fourteen years of absence caused by conflict and instability in the region. The congregation, now revitalized, is led by Rev. Paul Guek Deang, who previously served with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan before joining the Lutheran Church of the Sudan (LCSS). Under his leadership, the church has rapidly grown, welcoming 150 worshipers each week and providing a spiritual home for many who have endured years of hardship.

Recognizing the importance of theological education and strong pastoral leadership, LCSS plans to support Rev. Deang and other church leaders in pursuing essential Lutheran studies to deepen their understanding and strengthen their ministry. This commitment to ongoing education ensures that the congregation is rooted in Lutheran doctrine and equipped to meet the diverse needs of its members.

Looking ahead, Pagak Lutheran Church has identified a parcel of land to purchase for \$1,500, which, pending board approval, will provide a permanent site for worship, fellowship, and community development. Securing this land is vital for establishing a stable and accessible gathering place, enhancing both the spiritual and social impact of the church within Pagak town and the surrounding area. The church's renewed presence and dedication to growth embody the resilience and hope that define the mission of LCSS, offering guidance and support to a region on the path to recovery.

3. **Pangak Lutheran Church** – Situated in Pangak, is a new growing congregation in the central heart of South Sudan
4. **Meth Lutheran Church** – Located in Maiwut, South Sudan, Meth Lutheran Church is dedicated to fostering faith and unity within its community. Through its ongoing efforts, the congregation strengthens the spiritual life of the region and plays an active role in promoting reconciliation and hope among believers.

Ethiopia

1. **Luakdong Lutheran Church** — Situated within the Luakdong Refugee Camp in Gambella, Luakdong Lutheran Church stands as a vital refuge for those escaping conflict and turmoil. More than a worship center, the church provides crucial spiritual guidance and emotional support to refugees and their families who have endured hardship and instability. When waves of displaced people arrived from Nasir and Ulang Counties of South Sudan—many having gone extended periods without food—the Mission Team from King of Kings and Christ the Kings, LCSS leadership and the LCSS-NA responded

swiftly, offering a sanctuary for worship and solace. The congregation's dedication to compassion and service fosters a supportive environment where displaced individuals can rebuild, find belonging, and draw strength from faith. Through ongoing outreach and fellowship, Luakdong Lutheran Church remains a beacon of hope, unity, and spiritual care for those impacted by displacement in South Sudan and the surrounding region.

2. **Judea Lutheran Church** – Located in Gambella, Judea Lutheran Church stands as a vibrant center for evangelism and community engagement. The church plays a pivotal role in promoting Lutheran teachings and values, while also serving as a hub for outreach efforts within the local community. Currently, the congregation is undertaking the construction of a new church building, a significant milestone that will provide enhanced spaces for worship, Christian education, and community gatherings. This new facility is expected to deepen the church's impact by offering a welcoming environment for spiritual growth, fellowship, and service initiatives. Through these ongoing efforts, Judea Lutheran Church continues to embody the mission of strengthening faith and fostering hope among its members and the wider Gambella region.
3. **St. Paul Lutheran Church** — In response to the growing population of South Sudanese refugees and long-term residents in Addis Ababa, St. Paul Lutheran Church is being founded as a new congregation dedicated to meeting their spiritual, social, and community needs. For over a decade, many families associated with the Lutheran Church of the Sudan (LCSS) have settled in Addis Ababa, often attending worship services in non-Lutheran churches due to the absence of an official Lutheran congregation. The establishment of St. Paul Lutheran Church seeks to unify these families and provide a consistent Lutheran presence, offering a spiritual home where members can worship, grow in faith, and support each other through shared experiences.

To facilitate meaningful worship and enhance the church's outreach, the congregation is requesting \$3,000 in funding for musical instruments, which will play a vital role in community-building and enriching worship services. Additionally, to ensure a stable and accessible gathering space, the church is seeking an initial rental support of \$100 per month for six months. This temporary assistance will allow St. Paul Lutheran Church to establish itself, with the expectation that local members will take responsibility for ongoing rental costs once the congregation is firmly rooted.

Recognizing the importance of strong leadership and pastoral care, the community has identified the need for a dedicated pastor to guide the congregation's spiritual development and provide support for its members. A monthly stipend of \$100 has been requested to support and sustain pastoral leadership. Through these initiatives, St. Paul Lutheran Church aims to foster unity, nurture faith, and offer hope to South Sudanese

families and individuals in Addis Ababa, strengthening the broader mission of LCSS in East Africa.

Uganda

1. **Zion Lutheran Church** – Nestled in Omugo 7 Area within the Arua Refugee Settlement in Uganda, Zion Lutheran Church stands as an active pillar of hope for refugees and displaced families. The church is devoted to sharing the Gospel and offers more than spiritual guidance—it serves as a vital center for social services, emotional support, and community-building activities. By fostering a welcoming atmosphere, Zion Lutheran Church helps refugees find comfort and belonging, while also providing practical assistance through outreach programs, counseling, and fellowship. Through its dedicated efforts, the congregation nurtures faith, encourages resilience, and empowers individuals and families as they navigate challenging circumstances, contributing significantly to the wellbeing and unity of the Arua Settlement community.

The emergence and growth of these new congregations reflect the Lutheran Church of the South Sudan's (LCSS) unwavering commitment to expanding its ministry throughout East Africa. By establishing vibrant faith communities in both urban centers and rural settlements, LCSS is able to reach people from diverse backgrounds, including those facing displacement, adversity, and periods of transition. Each congregation—whether in South Sudan, Ethiopia, or Uganda—offers not only spiritual nourishment but also practical support, helping members rebuild their lives, strengthen their sense of community, and find renewed hope amid uncertainty. Together, these churches enrich the region's spiritual landscape, fostering resilience, unity, and opportunities for service across borders and cultures.

As LCSS continues to grow, its expanding network of congregations serves as a beacon for those in need, demonstrating the power of faith to transform lives and communities. The church's commitment to outreach, compassion, and service ensures that people from all walks of life have access to spiritual guidance, social resources, and opportunities for fellowship, furthering the mission of LCSS to serve, uplift, and inspire hope throughout East Africa.

International Partnerships and Ministry Support

The Lutheran Church of the South Sudan (LCSS) has benefited tremendously from the steadfast support of international partners, whose collaborative efforts have significantly strengthened the church's mission across East Africa. Their generosity and commitment have created enduring legacies that continue to enrich communities and empower individuals.

One of the year's most notable achievements was the delivery of 15,279 theological and college-level books, establishing a comprehensive library—the largest in the region. This facility now serves as a vital resource center for students from Gambella University and nearby colleges,

providing access to academic materials that foster intellectual growth, promote theological research, and support both secular and Christian education. The library's presence not only elevates the academic standards in Gambella but also contributes to the broader mission of nurturing future leaders within the church and the community.

Extending beyond the library, international partners helped construct a spacious room adjacent to the library, which has been adapted as a Nursing Skills Laboratory. This innovative space is designed to enhance practical learning and professional development for nursing students, equipping them with essential skills to serve their communities. The establishment of this laboratory reflects a commitment to holistic education, blending spiritual formation with vocational training.

Mission teams from King of Kings Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska and Christ the King Lutheran Church in Kingwood, Texas played a pivotal role in these projects. During their visit to Gambella, they donated 10 laptop computers, facilitating access for library staff and students. Additionally, they conducted hands-on training sessions for the staff, ensuring that the new resources would be managed effectively and sustainably.

Beyond infrastructure and material support, the mission teams contributed to the spiritual development of church leaders. Pastors Roger and Doyle Theimer led seminars for LCSS pastors and seminary students, focusing on the importance of prayer, spiritual discipline, and pastoral care. These sessions provided valuable guidance and encouragement, equipping church leaders to better serve their congregations and foster resilience during challenging times.

Together, these international partnerships have strengthened the foundation of LCSS's ministry, expanding educational opportunities, enhancing spiritual leadership, and improving community health. Their ongoing support underscores the power of global collaboration in advancing the church's mission and creating lasting positive change throughout the region.

Response to the Refugee Crisis

During the mission team's training mission at Trinity Compound in Gambella, a sudden outbreak of violence in Nasir and Ulang counties in South Sudan triggered a humanitarian emergency. The crisis forced more than 35,000 refugees to flee their homes and seek safety in neighboring regions. Many of these individuals endured long journeys, spending 18 days without access to adequate food or resources. The scale and urgency of the situation demanded swift action.

In response, the Lutheran Church of the South Sudan (LCSS), alongside the mission team and LCSS-NA, mobilized quickly to address the urgent needs of the displaced population. Recognizing the severity of the food shortage, they launched emergency fundraising initiatives

and organized the distribution of food and essential supplies. Their coordinated efforts provided critical relief, sustaining refugees until the United Nations was able to establish broader, ongoing support.

Beyond immediate aid, the LCSS-NA partnership demonstrated a commitment to lasting support. They sponsored the construction of Luakdong Lutheran Church, creating a spiritual sanctuary for those affected by the crisis. This new congregation not only offered a place for worship and pastoral care, but also helped foster hope, resilience, and community among people recovering from trauma and displacement. By combining emergency relief with long-term ministry and outreach, LCSS and its partners exemplified compassion, dedication, and the transformative power of faith in action as noted in the previous paragraphs.

Educational Development

The Lutheran Church of the South Sudan (LCSS) has made significant strides in advancing education and community development throughout the year. A major milestone was the completion of a five-classroom building, valued at \$84,000, which now serves as a vital hub for both Trinity Lutheran College and Trinity Lutheran Seminary. This new facility not only expands access to high-quality education for local students, but also provides a strong foundation for training the next generation of church leaders. By offering a supportive learning environment, the building helps foster academic excellence, spiritual formation, and personal growth, all of which are essential for empowering individuals to serve their communities effectively.

In addition to infrastructure development, the LCSS has prioritized evangelism and outreach. These efforts resulted in the establishment of Judea Lutheran Church, located east of Gambella Town. Construction is moving forward rapidly, and the new congregation is poised to become a center for worship, fellowship, and community support. The church's presence reflects LCSS's ongoing commitment to spreading the Gospel and nurturing spiritual growth in both urban and rural areas as noted above. Through these educational and evangelistic initiatives, the LCSS continues to strengthen its role as a catalyst for positive change, leadership development, and lasting hope in East Africa.

Recovery from Storm Damage

In April 2026, a devastating storm struck Gambella, inflicting significant damage on the church office block and severely disrupting daily operations. The storm caused the loss of important files, essential electronic equipment, and a heavy-duty printer—resources critical to the administrative functions of the Lutheran Church of the South Sudan (LCSS). The destruction posed a major challenge, threatening to impede the church's ability to serve its congregations and coordinate ongoing ministry and outreach projects.

In the wake of this setback, the LCSS received an outpouring of prayers and support from its partners. Christ the King Lutheran Church in Texas stepped forward to generously provide a replacement for the lost heavy-duty printer, ensuring that necessary communications and document processing could resume without prolonged interruption. Additionally, other congregations across Texas rallied together, contributing funds and resources to aid the reconstruction of the damaged office block. Their collective generosity made it possible to quickly mobilize rebuilding efforts, demonstrating the strength of the ties between LCSS and its international supporters.

Thanks to this coordinated response, the reconstruction of the church office block is now nearing completion. The restored facilities will soon provide a secure and functional environment for church administration once again. This recovery not only addresses immediate logistical needs but also reinforces the resilience of the LCSS community and the importance of global collaboration in overcoming adversity. The swift restoration of administrative capacity enables the church to continue advancing its mission, supporting educational initiatives, providing spiritual guidance, and responding effectively to the needs of congregations throughout the region.

Annual Events and Leadership Elections

The close of the fiscal year (September July) was marked by a series of significant events that underscored the Lutheran Church of the South Sudan's commitment to education, spiritual leadership, and organizational growth. First, a remarkable milestone was reached as 287 students graduated from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and Trinity Lutheran College. This diverse group of graduates included future church leaders, educators, and laypersons equipped to support their communities with both spiritual guidance and practical skills. Their achievements reflect the church's ongoing investment in academic excellence and the preparation of leaders dedicated to service and ministry.

Building on this foundation, the church celebrated the ordination and commissioning of four new pastors. These individuals, having completed rigorous theological training and pastoral formation, were entrusted with the responsibilities of shepherding congregations and advancing the church's mission in a rapidly changing environment. Their ordination not only strengthens the church's capacity for outreach and discipleship but also provides vital pastoral support to communities recovering from hardship and displacement, as described in the previous sections.

The year's activities culminated in a vibrant three-day Annual Gathering, which brought together church leaders, clergy, lay delegates, and members from across the region. This gathering served as a forum for worship, fellowship, training, and strategic planning, further deepening the sense of unity and shared purpose among participants. A central component of the Annual Gathering

was the election of new Synod Council members and District Deans. The newly elected leaders include Rev. Michael Dak Top, Rev. Peter Yoany Jong, and Rev. John Both Kang, who will serve on the Synod Council, and Rev. John Tut Deang (Upper Nile District) and Rev. John Chuol Kuany (Gambella District), who were chosen as District Deans.

These leadership transitions signal a new chapter for the Lutheran Church of the South Sudan—one marked by renewed energy, vision, and accountability. With fresh leaders at the helm, the church is well positioned to build on the year's achievements: advancing its mission, deepening its roots in the community, and responding proactively to both opportunities and challenges. Collectively, these annual events and elections embody the church's ongoing commitment to equipping leaders, fostering resilience, and serving as a beacon of hope and faith for East Africa.

Conclusion

The year 2026 has proven to be a transformative and inspiring period for the Lutheran Church of the South Sudan (LCSS). In the face of both opportunities and significant challenges, the church demonstrated extraordinary faith, perseverance, and unity. Major milestones included the rapid development of new congregations such as Judea Lutheran Church, the strengthening of evangelism and outreach, and a renewed focus on educational excellence, as evidenced by the graduation of 287 students from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and College. These efforts have not only expanded the church's spiritual influence but have also equipped a new generation of leaders, educators, and laypersons ready to serve their communities.

The resilience of the LCSS community was especially visible in its swift recovery from the devastating storm in April, which damaged the church office block and disrupted daily operations. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity and solidarity of partners—most notably Christ the King Lutheran Church in Texas and other congregations across the state—the church was able to promptly replace lost resources and rebuild vital infrastructure. This collective response not only restored operational capacity but also reinforced the bonds of international partnership and support, enabling the LCSS to continue its mission without interruption.

The close of the year was marked by significant leadership transitions during the vibrant Annual Gathering. The ordination of new pastors and the election of Synod Council members and District Deans infused the church with renewed vision, accountability, and energy. With these new leaders at the helm, the LCSS is well prepared to embrace future opportunities, overcome challenges, and extend its reach throughout East Africa.

As 2026 draws to a close, the Lutheran Church of the South Sudan stands as a steadfast beacon of hope, unity, and spiritual guidance. Through the unwavering commitment of local members and the enduring support of global partners, the church continues to proclaim the Gospel, nurture

resilience, and provide vital support to communities in need. With its foundation strengthened by recent achievements and its vision sharpened for the future, the LCSS is poised to foster lasting change and serve as a catalyst for faith, growth, and transformation across the region and beyond.