



Newsletter of Rev. Vance and Linda Becker at Matongo, Kenya January 2020

Wrapping Up in America

After Christmas in Kansas, we made one more stop to share about our church's work in eastern Africa, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Edmond, OK, where we were welcomed by Pastor Jonathan Meyer. This is the church our daughter's family attends.

Then we headed back to Minnesota, where the movers picked up our things for shipment and we took care of last-minute arrangements, including applying for visas. We left - just before a big blizzard - for Chicago, where we did final packing of our luggage and flew out on Jan. 15.



Many New Things in the New Year

The new year has already brought many changes for us. Our minds and bodies are working hard to adjust.

We arrived in Nairobi after a 30 hour trip by way of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

and were met by Shauen Trump, East and



South Africa Regional Director. We spent a few days in orientation, along with Dr. Walter and Robyn Steele, who will work with us at Matongo. In the evenings one of the local staff hosted other staff families and us at



their home for supper. We got to meet and visit with those who are on the team that will be supporting us. We also

learned the right way to eat ugali - with fingers.



On Sunday, we worshiped at the Lutheran "Cathedral," where we were invited to introduce ourselves. On the



way to the airport, as we were leaving, we drove by the Kibera slum, the largest in the world. Right



next to the airport is Nairobi national park, where we saw a giraffe in the distance.

Pray for us, praising God for His knowledge of all the future hold for

us, thanking Him for protection in our travels, and asking Him to give us health, endurance, and protection from bacteria, germs and viruses new to us.

Learning Before Teaching

Although our teaching will be in English, Swahili is commonly used, including in worship and in the market. Our first job here is to go to



language camp. For this, we flew, after an overnight in Dar Es Salaam,

Tanzania, where we met Sarah Kanoi, a missionary nurse. She helped us get Tanzanian sim cards for our phones and then accompanied us on to Iringa, Tanzania, for a few days, where she taught us about

health issues and other things.



We are staying at Masumbo Camp (picture a summer camp with cabins), several miles from town, down a dirt track and next to a river. This will be our home for the next few months.

Internet connection is rare here and electricity is on and off, so if you don't hear from us for a while, this is fair warning. Fortunately, we are

provided with good water and plenty of good food.

We hire a ride to town on weekends. There is a café with wifi there. On our first trip we bought more solar lanterns, Swahili Bibles and precautionary medicines.



Linda admired the colorful dresses the women were wearing.

We now have a week of learning



Swahili done and 11 weeks to go. We go to class until lunch at

1 pm., then study in the afternoon and evening.



Our brains are swollen but not exploding. Linda is doing especially well, to her surprise.

Monkeys

play on the lawn as we study and many birds sing. The Steeles have had had a lizard, frog, cobra and huge spider in their house. (Not us.) The owners live on the other side of the river which is reached by a zipline which Linda had to try out.



Pray for us, praising God for His constant presence, thanking Him for new learning experiences, and asking Him to help us learn Swahili well.

Swahili sample

Our first lesson was how to respond to greetings. In response to “Habare,” (“How’s it going?”) the proper response is “nzuri sana” (fine-very”) or “salama,” (“peaceful”) a word that comes from Swahili’s Arabic roots. Other words are borrowed from English, such as “piga picha” (“snap a picture”).

Bible reflection

Today it was found that a short circuit in our cabin cut the solar battery power to the others when we tried to turn on a light, leaving us all in the dark.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul reminds his readers that no matter how great their individual gifts, if they do not lovingly use them to work together, they are as useless as that power system with a short circuit.

Since being here, we have needed to depend very much on the rest of the team. This will always be true for us and for you and your church as well. Jesus, in his endless love, gives us His gifts, including those given through others.

Pray for us, praising God for His unfailing love, thanking Him for His many gifts and servants, and asking Him to give us harmony amid all the stresses of adjustments and inconveniences.

Connect with us.

Email us at vance.becker@lcms.org & linda.becker@lcmsintl.org

Help expand our network by liking [vance.becker.lcms](https://www.facebook.com/vance.becker.lcms) on facebook and sharing it and this newsletter with friends. Let us know about yourself and prayer requests. We will pray for you too.

People wonder...

How is the weather there?

It is rainy season now so it is often cloudy and can sprinkle or pour at any time. Everything is lush and green but in dry season all the trees drop their leaves. The altitude is almost a mile and it is fairly cool so Vance is glad he brought his long underwear from Minnesota, but Linda is comfortable just in long sleeves. The rain and humidity mean it takes several days for laundry to dry and towels never do.

If you are wondering about a question, email vance.becker@lcms.org

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All our funding comes through the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, not just an office in St. Louis but the people and congregations. We are grateful for many generous people, for yearly & monthly gifts, and also single gifts.

A monthly or yearly gift is ideal but a start-up gift is also very helpful.

- Checks written to LCMS with Becker/Kenya in the memo can be mailed to: *LCMS, P.O. Box 6861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861* or *Mission Central, 40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, IA 51034-7105* (missioncentral.us),
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- Please pray for us*, praising God for daily providing out of Fatherly, goodness and mercy, thanking Him for those who are able to give generously, and asking Him to keep providing funds for this work.