



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

Moving On!

We are delighted to have just learned that we are moving to Matongo, Kenya. The border has now opened and, with a certificate of a negative test for Covid 19, we don't need to quarantine after arrival. (Here is Vance getting his test.)

We are to leave by car the morning of Sat., Aug. 8, and cross the border and arrive at Matongo the evening of Mon., Aug. 10. Our route takes us to the west side of Tanzania, along Lake Victoria.

Our Regional Director, Rev. Shauen Trump, and Principal, Tom Omolo, will meet us at the border. Rev. Trump and a couple of other staff will stay a few days to help us arrange things we need, including some furniture, household supplies and food, since we will not yet have our own vehicle.

We are really looking forward to settling into our new home and getting acquainted with everything on campus.

Unfortunately, the Kenyan President has announced that colleges and universities will not hold on site classes until January so we will not begin teaching as planned. We are hope there will still be beneficial things we can do meanwhile.

Our work permits are still not yet issued. Thankfully, we no



longer need that before we can get into the country.

We have taken our last daily walk along the river, where the rapids are now

much lower in this dry season, and said goodbyes to our wonderful hosts here, the Moyer family (below).

Please pray for us, praising God for His knowledge of all the future holds for us, thanking Him for guiding us through changing times and mysterious ways, asking Him to make us well prepared for what is next, including the issuing of our work permits.



Thanks for all of your prayers so far, helping us on our way!

Intro to Matongo

People wonder...

What is the college at Matongo like?

Tom Aadland, who has been teaching there for several years, describes Matongo Lutheran Theological College like this:

The campus is five acres, with many native trees and flowers. The main building houses the 10,000 book library and lecture hall/ chapel. There are three men's dorms and six buildings housing faculty.

Since Scandinavian missionaries help start the school in 1977, over 600 students have been

educated. There are 15 faculty (including Walter and I), four being Kenyans who are full time and 8 adjunct, local pastors. Current enrollment is 94, from ten countries: Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and Malawi.

Pastors and Deaconesses study four years for a Bachelor's degree. There is also a two-year certificate program for Deaconesses and Evangelists. Pastors learn Greek and Hebrew and serve a year of vicarage. The other students also do an "internship."

Daily worship is currently in the lecture hall but there is a hope to be able to build a chapel.

Degrees have been accredited through a neighboring University, but work is beginning on independent accreditation.

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

Please pray for us, praising God for His wisdom and power to provide, thanking Him for all those who work with us, and asking Him to guide and protect all who serve our church here in Africa.

Bible reflection

July 24 was the Saints Day of St. James (brother of John). The Gospel for the day, Mark 10:35-45, is not very flattering. It tells of them coming to Jesus asking for honored positions at his right and left in his kingdom. They think they have what it takes. I think they meant well. They were praying with confidence that Jesus is the King and eagerly wanted to do whatever it took to be with him, but the other disciples were rightly indignant. Jesus explained that the greatest in his kingdom is the one who serves the rest. That one is Jesus.

A child may delight in “helping” Mom bake. She scoops and mixes what Mom hands her, but about the time it goes into the oven, she may run off to play while mom cleans up the mess. And when it is presented to Dad, who gets the praise? The child, of course.

We delight in serving in God’s kingdom, but our work is far from perfect or complete. Jesus prepares and hands us all we do, finishes it for us, cleans up the mess and then gives us the glory with our heavenly Father. This is how we become saints like St. James.

Please pray for us, praising God for giving us everything by grace, thanking Him for His constant presence and protection, and asking Him to increase our wisdom, faith and love.

Swahili sample

One of the most challenging things about Swahili is that there are seven different “classes” of nouns. Each has different beginning letters for singular and plural (usually). The hard part is that there are also different prefixes “agreeing” with them that must be used for verbs, adjectives and possessives and these prefixes vary among these words. And there are three more sets of prefixes depending on whether a thing is near, far or in something.

So, for example, if it is car, gari, and table, meza:

a car stays- gari linakaa

a table stays – meza inakaa

new car –gari jipya

new table – meza npya

bad car– gari baya

bad table - meza mbaya

these cars- magari haya,

these tables - meza hizi

my car- gari yangu,

my table - meza zangu

many cars- magari mengi

many tables – meza nyingi

car of...- gari la..

table of... - meza ya

This is why, every morning, Vance recites all of the variations for all of the nine classes to himself six times every morning but needs to stop and think when he is talking. Can you believe Tanzanian first graders rattle things off as fast as kids anywhere else?

The Swahili spoken in different countries varies. Fortunately for us, once we are in Kenya everything is lumped into two noun classes, one

for people and animals and another for everything else.

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Financial support

All our funding comes through the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which is 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 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-66861 or *Mission Central*, 40718 Highway E16, Mapleton, IA 51034-7105,

- Give on-line at www.lcms.org/givenow/becker
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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.