



A KISII CHRISTMAS

Venic smiled when I asked her how they celebrate Christmas in Kisii Land.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services are the highlights of the Feast Day.

Christmas Eve service begins around 8pm and goes past midnight. Then, Christmas morning, they gather again around 10am for several hours of singing, preaching and celebration.

When I asked her about Christmas presents, she smiled and said, "We exchange gifts on Boxing Day." (December 26th)

Because the parish pastor has five congregations, not every congregation can have the Sacrament that day. That is why we serve here, to help raise up more qualified pastors!



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Meet Deaconess Venic



Deaconess Intern Venic Gasare leading a Youth Seminar

Robyn and I drove to Nyagesha Lutheran Church, in the Kenyan highlands to visit one of my students, now on her deaconess internship. Venic has completed her course work toward a Diploma in Diakonia and is now working within Nyagesha Parish, which includes about five congregations. She is a member of the Kisii Tribe, who live in the high country in the western part of Kenya. Her father, now retired, served for many years as an evangelist in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya (ELCK).

Among her many responsibilities, she works with the youth of the congregations she serves. The day we visited her she was teaching a Youth Seminar on "Responsibilities of Christian Youth." She stressed ways in which they could serve in the church, contributing to the life of their congregations. She also discussed with them how their lifestyle, including speech and dress, communicate to others their commitment to Christ. She wants them to know that they too can tell others about Jesus.

The Kisii people were among the first to respond to the pure teaching of the Gospel as it was taught to them by Lutheran missionaries. The ELCK, in their region, sponsors many primary and secondary schools. While the Kenyan government places teachers into these schools to teach the secular subjects, the Lutheran Church provides the religious instruction and school chaplains. This means that the schools are means by which the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ can be proclaimed, not only to the Lutheran students, but also to all in the community. Venic counsels students in both the primary and secondary schools — (see next page)

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- For Venic as she finishes her internship and prepares to serve as a commissioned deaconess.
- For the Kisii Lutherans, that they continue to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to members of their tribe.
- That the Kisii Lutherans continue to reach beyond their own tribe to others with the saving message of the Christ Child, Jesus.
- For continued faithful support, as our Lord continues to work through us there at Matongo and beyond.
- For our students' safe travels over the Christmas break.
- For all of us, that we may have a joyous and edifying celebration of the NATIVITY OF CHRIST JESUS.

• **BLESSED AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU!**

WITNESS ALWAYS



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— especially the girls.

Located between the Nyagesha Congregation and the primary school, the Church has a school which serves handicapped children, those with mental and emotional challenges. Venic is learning how to serve them—providing her with new challenges.

As part of the Deaconess training program at Matongo, the women take Home Economics courses, which provide them with skills to support themselves and their families as they serve the Church and community as deaconess. In the photo below, five deaconess students currently at Matongo displayed their handiwork—clergy stoles they made and embroidered. Upon graduation, each deaconess receives a Singer Treadle Sewing Machine. These machines, which they earn through their hard work are funded by people like you—members of congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Venic will get hers in May.

Thank you for your support of our work as we serve the Lord here in Kenya!



Venic's Pastor with students from the School

Remember, you can help us continue to teach Future church workers here in East Africa by your prayers and financial support at:

lcms.org/givenow/steele

Or at the world-famous Mission Central MISSION CENTRAL

40718 Highway E-16

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Make the memo line: Steele/ Kenya



Diaconal Students Displaying their Handiwork

For more information on our work and our progress check out:

Our Website: SteelesInAfrica.com

LCMS page: lcms.org/steele

Or Facebook: Walter Steele



There are many opportunities to serve as short-term or GEO missionaries. Check out the current list and download an application at lcms.org/service. Click on "Service Opportunities."

To support the LCMS through the work of Walter and Robyn Steele, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
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Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mark checks "Support of Steele/Kenya." Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on my online giving page at lcms.org/steele.