



Newsletter of Rev. Vance and Linda Becker at Matongo, Kenya February 2022

Christmas Visits

We were happy to make a visit to the U.S. during the Christmas break, our first after two years of being here. Despite some challenges with getting required COVID tests and weather related flight changes, we had a good trip. We enjoyed seeing brothers, sisters, children, especially grandchildren and Vance's Mother.



While visiting our daughter in Jackson, MS, we shared a presentation with Christ Lutheran Church and enjoyed meeting Pastor Fields and the people there. We also shared a presentation and were welcomed by Pastor Hageman and old friends at Trinity, Garden City, KS. Finally, while visiting our son, we shared with his church, St. James, Chicago, and Pastor Hess.

We look forward to many more church visits when we return this summer. We are working out our itinerary now.

Please pray for us, praising God for His presence throughout the world and His protecting angels, thanking Him for the encouragement of family and friends and asking Him to begin opening doors for our return visits.

New Class in a Semester

We started a new semester on January 24. Vance is teaching several classes he has taught before: New Testament Introduction, Homiletics II, Lutheran Confessions and Symbolics (comparing the teachings of different churches). A new class is Pauline Epistles. He is still working to prepare all the materials for this class.

Some of these classes are larger, such as New Testament Introduction, which has 26 students, and so three of these classes meet in our new classroom which is larger than the others. This means we no longer need to rearrange tables and chairs in chapel each day to hold classes there.

Please pray for us, praising

God for the working of His word, thanking Him for students with open hearts and minds, and asking Him to make all of us effective teachers and preachers of the gospel.

Back with Books

While returning from the U.S., we were able to bring back some of the books which have been

purchased for use here. There are several hundred pounds of them all together so we had to prioritize which were needed first and which could fit into our luggage.



One book is a New Testament Introduction, which is now being used for the class Vance is teaching. Another is a Bible handbook which those who are graduating this year will take with them. We brought some of the inexpensive Bibles and most of those have already been bought, for \$1 each, by students who had none.

We are looking forward to a visit by our son and wife next week who will be bringing more with them.

Please pray for us, praising God for His inspired word, thanking Him for providing the resources we need and asking Him to lead us to make wise use of them all.



Bible reflection

This past Christmas, people may have gotten various kinds of gifts. Some, like clothing or jewelry are for the receiver herself to use and are intended to make her look good.

Others, like food or artwork, can be kept to oneself or shared with others so they can enjoy them also. Some gifts, like many games, are worthless unless they are enjoyed along with others.

Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, includes a long discussion of spiritual gifts. One thing that was apparently not understood about them seems to be related to another problem of boasting about who was greatest. Those with certain special abilities thought that they were for use in their own spiritual life and made them better Christians than others.

Paul answers that all of the gifts are for the purpose of benefiting, not ourselves, but others. They are for use in serving the whole church. If they are not used in a loving way that benefits others, they are worthless.

It is fitting that spiritual gifts are for use in serving others since they are given to us only because of Jesus who, even though he was greater than anyone, humbled himself in order to serve each of us. This is why he used all of his abilities to make sure that he suffered and died for us on the cross so that we can be forgiven and receive the most precious gifts of eternal life with him.

Please pray for us, praising God for choosing to give each of us gifts as He does, thanking Him for those who use their gifts to serve us and asking Him to help us all to have abilities, opportunities, and the desire to serve in ways that build up the church.

Culture Contrasts

One of the biggest differences between the culture here and what we have been used to is attitude about time. In the U.S. and much of western culture, people are very conscious about time. They expect things to start and end on time. Even those who are always late (we know who we are) are self-conscious about it.

People here are less time conscious. (Who knew Vance was always an African!) Punctuality tends to be a literally a foreign idea, even though leaders of events are often urging people to “keep time.” At the starting time for something, such as worship, is when people will soon start sifting in gradually.

We have heard that if something is scheduled to start at a certain time it means that is when you stop what you are doing and start getting ready to go to that event.

Part of the reason may be the unpredictable challenge of knowing how long it will take to get somewhere because you don’t know what could happen. In western culture, being late can be considered disrespectful to the people waiting for you. Here, being in a hurry to leave is disrespectful to the people you are with.

People wonder...

Do you work together with other Lutheran mission organizations that help provide resources?

This question was asked in response to what we have shared about our bringing books over from the U.S.

The answer is, “Yes.” Lutheran Heritage Foundation, which translates and publishes Lutheran books in various languages around the world, has an office in Nairobi and prints books here, some in Swahili and some in English. We are able to get books from them for free, such as the Small Catechism with explanation, and distribute them to students.

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

Please pray for us, praising God for knowing just what we need, thanking Him for partners and coworkers and asking Him to continue bless our fellow ministries.

Contact us at the address below to let us know how we can be praying for you too.

Connect with us.

Email us at vance.becker@lcms.org & linda.becker@lcmsintl.org, or send us postal mail at the Mission Central address below.

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.

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
- or missioncentral.us/becker
- Give by phone at 888-843-5267.

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.