



Newsletter of Rev. Vance and Linda Becker at Matongo, Kenya October 2023

## Graduation Celebration

Graduation for both our students and the related teacher's college was the second weekend of September, after summer internships finished. We had 31 diploma and certificate graduates this year, not including five bachelor degree students who graduated in Nairobi from the school through which those degrees were accredited.

Vance was the preacher. Linda played piano for the service. Since the man who was directing the choir graduated, she has been teaching the music for the choir, including a large group of new students.



It was an exciting day. We got to see students who began here at the same time we did for one more time.

*Please pray for us*, praising God for His good plans for these graduates, thanking Him for all those who helped them to reach this point, and asking Him to use them for great benefit in His kingdom.



## Chapel Construction

Progress is being made on construction of the new chapel, even though the regular heavy rains in this season cause a challenge. The "forest" of poles support forms for pouring the floor of a balcony and side rooms above the entry, office and bathrooms.



*Please pray for us*, praising God for His presence with us in worship, thanking Him for the gifts which make this building possible and asking Him to keep the work safe and effective.



## The Great Crowd of Witnesses

A quick "all school picture" was taken after Wednesday chapel a few weeks ago. Not all of the faculty or students were there for the picture and we didn't put the prettiest ones (deaconess students) in the front this time, but some of the new faces can be seen.

*Please pray for us*, praising God for calling us all into his service, thanking Him for bringing us together in this place of learning, and asking Him to help us all to do our work with well..



## Culture Contrast

One difference between American and east African cultures is attitudes about what is morally right and wrong. Abortion and, homosexuality

and various other sexual variations are relatively accepted in western countries but totally unacceptable to the culture here, which places a very high value on having children. American attempts to use financial aid as a way to promote acceptance of these things as “human rights” produce significant resistance.

Any drinking of alcohol is also considered seriously wrong by most East Africans. This seems to be partly due to historical roots of the mission work here and the strength of fundamentalist churches, but many Lutherans also say that for East Africans, any drinking always leads to getting drunk without the ability to practice moderation. This attitude does not seem to hold true in former French colonies.

At the same time, sexual activity before and outside marriage and having more than one wife, while seen as wrong by Christians, seems to be more common and socially accepted. This also may be related to the importance of having children but it does lead to major problems with sexually transmitted disease. Our curriculum has a whole course on dealing with HIV/Aids.

*Please pray for us*, praising God for His gifts of life, thanking Him for His instructions on how to live, and asking Him to lead all to obedience and forgiveness when we fail.

## **People wonder...**

*What languages do your students use?*

When I was handing out books to students, I asked each one what languages were best for them, since I could get more books for them from Lutheran Heritage Foundation in some East African Languages.

I was surprised that the majority said English, since the English of many does not seem very good. It was explained to me that they may be better at speaking another language but better at reading English. Some have never learned to read their mother tongue.

The second most common was Swahili, the main language of Tanzania and some Kenyans, although this is not known at all by some students. Among Kenyans, the tribal languages most often mentioned were Kisii and Luo, the two tribes in this area, and also Kimeru and Maasai.

For one Kenyan student it is Kikamba, also spoken in parts of Uganda where Luganda is more common.

The students from Rwanda use Kinyarwanda and also some French. French is the best language for those from Congo and Burundi.

Those from Malawi use Chichewa. Students from South Sudan use English but their mother tongues are Dinka or Nuer.

*Please pray for us*, praising God for loving those of every tribe and language, thanking Him for giving His word in human language, and asking Him to help all of us understand and teach it well.

*If you wonder about a question, email [vance.becker@lcms.org](mailto:vance.becker@lcms.org)*

## **Simplified Song**

1 [LSB 656]  
Our strong defending wall is God,  
A weapon and protection.  
He rescues us from ev'ry need  
From whatever direction.  
The old enemy is bad and angry.  
Great evil and lies Are weapons he  
applies. No one on earth is like him.  
2  
We fail when we do all we can.  
Soon hopes are disappointed.  
But for us fights the right strong man  
By God himself appointed.  
Now, who can this be? Christ Jesus  
is he, All heaven's troops' King,  
True God of ev'rything;  
He takes control forever.  
3  
When devils fill earth ev'rywhere,  
All wanting to consume us,  
We will not fear or have a care;  
We will achieve our purpose.  
Let them shout with hate; Earth's  
lord is too late. He can hurt us none!  
He's judged; the work is done;  
One little word defeats him.

4  
The Word they must allow to stand  
And little thanks have for it;  
He's with us in this battle land  
With his good gifts and Spirit.  
If they take our life, Goods, name,  
child and wife, If we lose it all,  
The things they win are small;  
We always have the kingdom.

***If you get this newsletter by U.S. mail but also by email and don't need the paper copy. Let us know at the Mission Central address below.***

## **Connect with us.**

Email us at [vance.becker@lcms.org](mailto:vance.becker@lcms.org) & [linda.becker@lcmsintl.org](mailto: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](http://www.lcms.org/givenow/becker) or [missioncentral.us/becker](http://missioncentral.us/becker)
- Give by phone at 888-930-4438.

*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.