



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



Past Meets the Future

We had guests on campus, visiting from Sweden, led by Rev. Reijo Arkkila, who was the first principal of Matongo Lutheran Theological College when it began in 1978. He gave a talk about the word and sacraments, “three witnesses on the way to heaven.”

On the left in the picture above is the current chapel. Behind Rev. Arkillia on the right is the new chapel going up. It will soon be ready for the roof to be built.

Please pray for us, praising God for preserving His word and His church through the ages, thanking Him for faithful pastors and teachers, and asking Him to help them and their churches to continue growing.

Team Training Retreat

Our Africa team training retreat was in Rwanda in October. Dr. Will Schumacher taught about approaches to mission



work throughout history. We enjoyed seeing many friends and co-workers and meeting some new ones who have recently come. (In the group picture, Linda is near the middle behind her friend Anita Clausing, both wearing red on Reformation Sunday, and I am next to her.) Some are from our partner church in Brazil where the language is Portuguese. They are first learning English, the language used to teach here. Linda talks twice each week,



through the computer, with a son from one of the families to help with English conversation so that he will be able to go to school here.

Please pray for us, praising God for spreading His kingdom in many ways, thanking Him for willing fellow workers, and asking Him to help us all to learn what we need to help us do our work well.

Going to Visit

A student who lives nearby really wanted us to come and visit his family, so we did that one Saturday morning. Of course, our car was overflowing with extra people who rode part way both going there and back, and it took

most of the day because, as soon as we arrived, a chicken was put in a pot to cook. It was a special occasion. We met several extended family, who live in the same group of small homes.

We were invited by a deaconess



student to her church on Sunday. Of course, that meant Vance preached. In that service a woman was received by adult confirmation. She had married a man from the church. It was interesting that she was then able to take communion that Sunday while her husband was still under church discipline for leaving his first wife to marry her.



Please pray for us, praising God for the gift of life, thanking Him for both human families and the family of faith, and asking Him to strengthen our families in the faith.

Culture Contrast

One difference between American culture and some other countries is what is known as “Power Distance.” That is when those who have authority or honor (sometimes because of wealth) are considered to be high above other people. This includes elected officials, teachers, pastors and, in our case, Americans.

One thing this means is that those who are in some position of authority are assumed to know what is right and what they say is seldom openly questioned. This seems strange to Americans who assume everyone should have their say.

Those in authority may commonly tell whoever they happen to see to do something for them – take this somewhere or go to get that - without asking if it is convenient for them or not.

One thing this means is that it is difficult for us to carry much of anything in public. If a student sees us, they will come and expect that they should carry it for us. (It does not seem this is only because we are “old.”)

Please pray for us, praising God for being Lord of all, thanking Him for authorities that serve us, and asking Him to right respect to them but honor to Him above all.

People wonder...

How are the roads there?

The roads in Kenya are being improved with the help of China. The main road by our campus was paved shortly before we came. It was a very rough track before, especially after rain. The highway from our area to Kisumu was in the process of being repaved when we came three years ago and is now very good. The half dozen main streets of Sondu, the

nearest town, were paved for the first time a couple of months ago. The road past the gate of our campus, like most roads is rough dirt with lots of rocks and ruts. We have been on some roads which are paved but have so many huge potholes that they are worse to drive on than those that are not paved. Google maps also shows as “roads” single track public paths that can be used by foot or motorcycles although some are wide enough for our four-wheel drive vehicle.

Please pray for us, praising God for opening doors for the gospel, thanking Him leading us to those who need to know Him, and asking Him to keep us safe in all our travels.

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

Simplified Song

[LSB 677]

1
For holy ones now resting endlessly,
Who in the world spoke your truth faithfully, Praise to you, Jesus, will forever be! Alleluia! Alleluia!

2
You were their rock, strength and protecting wall; You, in the good fight, leader through it all; You, their true light, although the darkness fall. Alleluia! Alleluia!

3
Now help your soldiers, faithful, true and brave, Fight like those you are raising from the grave And win with them the crown for those you save! Alleluia! Alleluia!

4
All share in good when joined in God as one! We weakly struggle, they shine as the sun; But we are with them by what you have done. Alleluia! Alleluia!

5
And when the fight is hard, the war is long, We start to hear the distant joyful song; Then hearts are brave again and arms are strong. Alleluia! Alleluia!

6
The golden sunset shines from in the west; Soon, soon to faithful fighters comes their rest; Sweet is the calm of that home that is best. Alleluia! Alleluia!

7
Look, there comes sunrise for a brighter day: Your holy ones rise in a bright display; The King of Glory passes on his way. Alleluia! Alleluia!

8
Flowing from all the earth, from all around, Through white gates crowds without a limit found, To Father, Son and Spirit shout this sound: Alleluia! Alleluia!

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 & 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
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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.