



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

Kisumu Synody

In December, we went along with our school choir to the closing service of a “synody” at the area Bishop’s church in Kisumu. A synody is an annual event when a whole parish (several congregations) comes together for several days of teaching and singing.

The four hour service was outdoors and included several choirs, confirmation of young people done by the bishop and Holy Communion. The church school’s boys’ marching band was part of the processional. The services was followed by a meal, of course.



The guest preacher was retired Archbishop Walter Obare. He was the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya when it joined in fellowship with the LCMS.

Please pray for us, praising God for the power of His word and sacraments, thanking Him for people ready to preach and hear it and asking Him to help all of us to keep growing and learning.



Semester Finale

In December, Matongo Lutheran Theological College was able to have final exams and finish the fall semester on schedule. This also



marked the end of the three month internship for Deaconess and Evangelist students.

Archbishop

Joseph Omolo was present for the closing chapel service and afterward dedicated a new classroom building which was built over the past three months. It is called Martin Lundstrom Hall,

named after the Finnish pastor who began Lutheran Mission work in Kenya. With this new classroom, we will no longer need to rearrange



the chapel daily to teach the larger classes there.

Starting in January, it will be good to be back on regular schedule for the first time since COVID began, God willing.

Please pray for us, praising God for working all things for good according to His will, thanking Him for His providing and protecting, and asking Him to bring us and our students safely together again.

“Home” for Christmas

This school year’s five week Christmas break is the longest scheduled break since we came to Africa and COVID soon began. This has allowed us to return to the U.S.



long enough to visit family for Christmas. This includes four stops to see Linda’s siblings, Vance’s mother

and our two children.

On our return trip, we will bring back some of the books which supporters have helped purchase for the classes and students at our school.

There is not enough time on this trip to visit supporters, but we plan to be back for several months this coming summer and hope to see many at that time. Let us know if you want us to stop at your church or drop by to see you on the way.

Please pray for us, praising God for occasions to celebrate His salvation, thanking Him for encouraging us through family and friends and asking Him to keep generously providing for us and our supporters.

Bible reflection

Mary and Joseph took seriously their job of raising God's own son. They saw to it that the law was kept in his circumcision on the eighth day and taking him to Jerusalem for Passover as soon as he was old enough. They apparently also saw that he received good training in God's word before that.

It seems that they didn't do it all alone. On the trip to Jerusalem for Passover, they went along with a group of neighbors and relatives, among whom Jesus spent the day during the trip. We also do well to regularly join with relatives and neighbors in taking our children to worship so that they grow in wisdom, knowledge and favor with God and men.

The Greek word for the group that traveled together to Jerusalem is the word "synod." That is what the Synod is, those with whom we walk together as believers. It is through participation in this group that we do Christian education, care for one another's needs, and also share the gospel with others around the world.

This is how we also are always about our Father's business. We can do it because, whether we see him or not, Jesus is always with us along the way.

Please pray for us, praising God for humbling Himself to an obedient child for our sake, thanking Him for all those who walk together with us in our church and asking Him to help us all to keep growing in wisdom, stature and favor with God and men.

Culture Contrasts

One of the first things we learned about the culture in this part of the world is the importance of greetings. The most common greeting in

Swahili is "Habare?" (Literally, "News?") to which the reply is "Nzuri Sana," "very good." Other replies include "Poa," "Cool," and "Salama Kabisa," "Peaceful Completely." One of the first things school children learn to say in English is "How are you?" and the reply, "I am fine." They love saying this to any foreigner they see.

Even when you go to a shop or speak to someone about any other business, you don't do it without first asking, "How are you?" and often also asking about their family, etc. As in many rural areas, calling out a greeting to anyone you see when walking down the road is expected.

People wonder...

Since the COVID Omicron variant was discovered in South Africa, how is that affecting life in Kenya?

The regular COVID procedures have remained in place since last year. Masks are to be worn indoors and when in groups. Temperatures are taken when entering businesses and handwashing or sanitizing is done at the same time. Seating is done at partial capacity and social distancing is to be practiced.

Fortunately, COVID sickness and hospitalization does not seem to be common in our area, but the nearest place to get a test is about 45 minutes away. We have heard that the vaccine is now available at the clinic near our school.

Kenya has just implemented a vaccine requirement for anyone entering the country, which could impact students returning from Christmas break.

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

Please pray for us, praising God for vaccines and medicines, thanking Him for keeping us safe and healthy

and asking Him to continue protecting us and our students from disease.

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.