



Writing to you from Nairobi, Kenya

August 2011

Photos in Focus

Josiah at VBS



Vacation Bible School on the Kenyan Coast

One hundred sixty enraptured children look at Jim and Geoffrey. What will they do next? The woka-woka song? A story? Jim's face glows with the infectious excitement that keeps this large group engaged as he begins singing, "At a time like this..." Moments later the resounding chorus of small voices joins in, "Oh I need the Lord to help me!" An hour later children are grouped by ages and working at one of three stations—arts and crafts, sports, and story time. At each station they learn more about Jesus Christ and the amazing Gospel message.



Geoffrey and Jim Teach about the Cross

Geoffrey works with Nuru, Kenya's Lutheran Hour Ministries Office, as a specialist in children's programming. Jim works in children's ministry at our newest Congregation Connect partner, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. A Congregation Connect partner enters into a relationship with a national church, in this case the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, intending to commit to at least one visit a year for five years in one particular area. This August was St. Andrew's first team trip, bringing a small but energetic and capable group of six to minister to the children in this area through Vacation Bible School. The team of six was joined by Kenya's new GEO missionaries Tim and Megan Dooms who were in orientation before deployment to their workplace.

The VBS program ran at two sites. At each location it began with a day of door-to-door evangelism and invitation. Each door-to-door team consisted of one or more local church leaders, American visitors, and representatives from Nuru who are specialists in evangelism and outreach. In line with Kenyan customs, teams were always warmly welcomed despite significant religious differences. The Christian Church here is the minority—close to 99% of the coastal population is Muslim. So while we were sometimes asked not to pray over a household, we could always share our own story of Christ's work in our lives, invite them to send their children to the "Children's Fun Day," and to come themselves to the Nuru Film Shows (featuring the Jesus Film in the local language) in the evening. Of those 160 children listening to Jim and Geoffrey at VBS, over 120 were Muslim.



The Team: St. Andrews + Dooms + Trumps

Over the course of one week this team of local church workers, Nuru, and the St. Andrew's participants proclaimed the Gospel message to 500 children at VBS. Countless numbers of these children, we pray, took their experiences and stories home to share with their families. During door-to-door evangelism visits, the Holy Spirit brought at least two adults to new faith in Jesus Christ and, we are certain, planted a seed of faith in many more. Praise the Lord for His work among the people of this coastal region!



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Prayer Requests

- That the Gospel seed planted in the children who attended VBS be nurtured and flourish
- That the adults who heard of Christ and His works or saw a depiction of His Gospel in a film show come to faith
- That the burden be eased for those who walk miles to fetch water every day

In Praise

- For the success of St. Andrew's first team trip to Kenya
- For the Spirit's work in those who professed new belief in Christ and that they be encouraged in their new faith and protected from harm
- For the work and vision of givecleanwaternow.org



Give Clean Water Now

"That is our challenge," Rev. Joseph Ngutta said to Shauen as they prepared for over 300 children to come onsite for two days of VBS. "We have no water."

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya's congregation in the village of Menzamwenye has access to a bore-hole (drilled) well a quarter mile away—except that it produces salty water. "Fresh" water is gathered from a small lake behind an earthen dam 3 miles distant. How would we bring enough fresh water to this hot and humid VBS site for 300 children to drink and wash their hands and for the cooks to prepare food and clean up afterwards? As usual, the church rose to the challenge, enlisting their youth to carry over 1200 gallons of water from the lake to the church.

Unfortunately, it's not at all unusual for clean water to be 3 or more miles from a Kenyan's home. Access to nearby clean water is arguably the most important issue in the developing world. Water activists describe it this way: Clean water located close to the home means less time spent fetching water. Children

who are freed of the responsibility of fetching water can now go to school. Education leads to increased earning potential. That leads to more taxable and discretionary income. That leads to a higher demand for better healthcare, schools, and infrastructure. This leads to sustainable development.

A couple months ago Shauen received an email out of the blue from Bill White, the founder and executive director of Give Clean Water Now seeking a local contact in Kenya to explore opportunities to partner with the Lutheran church here to drill wells in communities across the country. This month when Mr. White visited Kenya, Shauen was more



Source of Fresh Water for Menzamwenye

than happy to show him a few opportunities where wells could make a huge difference in people's lives. Together they envisioned a future where Lutheran congregations host a bore-hole well, taking upon themselves the burden of maintaining it as a service to their community and a point of contact for Gospel proclamation. Praise the Lord for this opportunity for us all to grow in service, servanthood, and stewardship!

Kentucky Fried Chicken

We have no McDonalds, no Burger King, no Olive Garden or Panera Bread. In fact, Kenya has had no American restaurant of any kind... until now. The very first American restaurant just opened about 30 minutes from our house: KFC. In a few months they'll



Krista and Josiah at KFC

open a second location just a mile from us. The menu is much simplified from the American franchises: they only have original recipe and spicy, the only available side is mashed potatoes with gravy, and there's no ice in the itty-bitty drinks. But it's definitely KFC. We'll manage.