



Lutherans IN Africa

FORMING AFRICAN LUTHERANS TO BE TEACHERS OF THE FAITH

www.lutheransinafrica.com | January 2021

Welcome to 2021 with Lutherans in Africa!



"God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things that we cannot comprehend.

For to the snow he says, 'Fall on the earth,' likewise to the downpour, his mighty downpour. He seals up the hand of every man, that all men whom he made may know it."

Job 37: 5-7

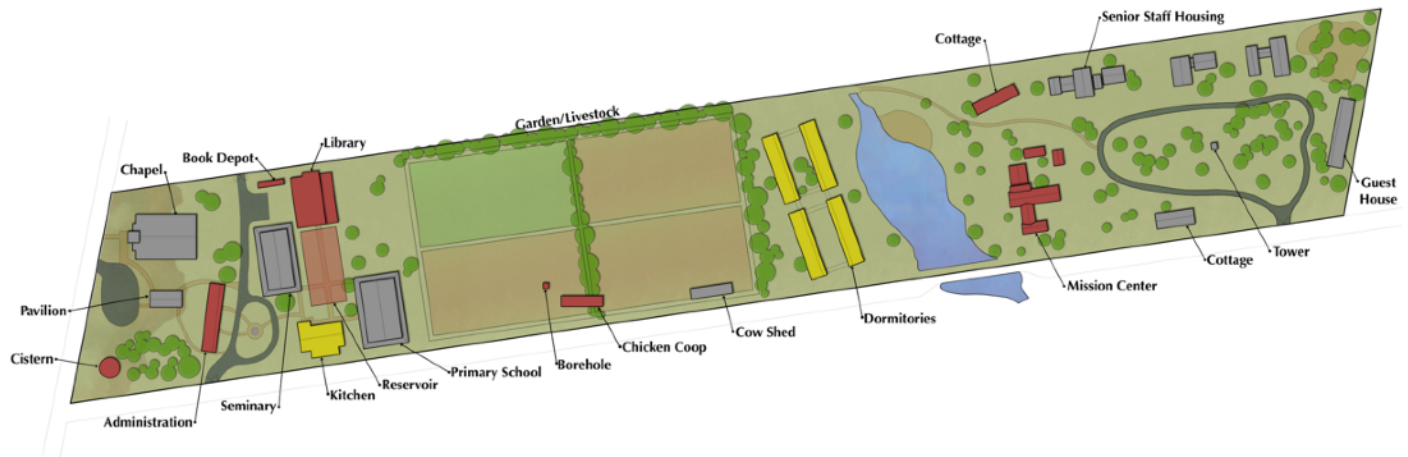
New Year, New Challenges

Blessed 2021 to all of you dear Lutherans in Africa friends! We are so happy to have you walk alongside us as we begin this new year of work spreading the Gospel of Christ crucified and the salvation He yearns to give to all nations. We pray that our good Lord will continue to guide us and accomplish His purpose in everything that Lutherans in Africa does.

COVID has caused multiple disruptions for many of you and also for us. Last year, it delayed our flight to America by over two months. We missed our daughter's graduation from high school and the chance to see many of you during furlough. Now it prevented us from going back to Kenya!

We were scheduled to travel back home the first week of the year. This time the flight left on schedule, only without us. Pastor May and Tiina contracted COVID in December. At first, we were grateful that it happened right before Christmas because this meant we could recover before traveling. We did not know that the type of test required for international travel is very sensitive. It is required to have a negative PCR test 72 hours before travel. This is the one where they stick the q-tip up your nose. These tests are so sensitive that even dead virus cells will give a positive test for 45-90 days AFTER recovering. This meant that even though we had recovered and were not contagious, we cannot travel internationally until it is entirely out of our bodies.

As a result, we had to scramble to come up with alternative plans quickly. The first thing was we needed a place to stay. Before leaving, we were staying at an Airbnb in Minnesota, but that was booked by someone else because it was expected that we were leaving. The LIA mission board discussed and looked into different options. There was a home in Minnesota, but that was being renovated and wouldn't be ready for a month. Then the mother of Jason Stephens (the LIA architect) graciously allowed us to stay with her for a month. This meant a two-day drive from Minnesota to Houston: the first day was more challenging as we drove ten hours in a snow storm. After we got through Oklahoma, thankfully the weather warmed up and the only telltale sign of the cold north was a mess caused by snow, salt, and slush that covered our car.



One of the reasons why we were willing to drive all the way to Texas is that Pastor May can work together with Jason Stephens to finalize all the drawings for the cafeteria and dormitories. As soon as that is done, proper permits for new buildings can be obtained in Kenya. The LST's contractor has returned to Kenya after his long period in the USA, and one bright ray of joy amid these gloomy COVID tidings is that the construction project can resume even in Pastor May's absence. This is because Jason had measured and staked out the foundations when he visited the site year ago, so the contractor knows exactly where the buildings go.

It is very exciting that we are finally able to begin building the cafeteria and dormitories for the students! Gifts from you, dear supporters, have enabled the third phase of LST's building project to commence, and we give you heartfelt thanks. Our prayer is that these facilities will be built swiftly to provide a much-needed upgrade for the students' living conditions.

While we are in Texas, Pastor May can also look into shipping the books that several congregations and individuals have graciously donated to LIA. These were supposed to go out earlier, but non-essential shipping was closed during COVID. A lot of time and effort has gone into packing these books into boxes, piling them onto shipping pallets, and labeling all contents to avoid any hassle and extra fees when the container arrives in Mombasa harbor in Kenya. This book container is one testimony to many and various volunteers and donors who selflessly share their time, talents, and wealth to



Photo: Jason Stephens





Photo: Ellen Born

enable the work of LIA. God be praised for every single one of you!

Regrettably, Pastor May's hindrance to arrive in LST will cause a delay in opening this year's classes. The students were very much looking forward to learning biblical Greek. We thank God that several of our students can continue to help their local congregations, but we are undeniably sad that they will have to wait to get back to their studies.

In the upcoming months, we will write more about events that are taking place here in the USA and also what is going on at the LST. Keep your eyes open for more student introductions as well.

Prayer Items

We give thanks for

- the most wonderful weeks we got to spend with our two eldest children during Christmas break
- relatively mild COVID symptoms and healing
- donations that enable the commencement of construction of cafeteria and student dormitories

We ask your prayers for

- Pastor May as he has begun a new semester of doctorate studies
- the May family's return to Kenya at the right time

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- beginning of new construction and donations to fully cover this phase three of the LST building project
- peace of mind and patience to all students who wait for the classes to continue

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