



Rockrohr News and Notes

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Daily Graces from God

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Ministry Information

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Look for us on Facebook too!

Our newsletter did not go out in February and now it is already mid-March.

You will read why below: We have been swamped with emergencies. *We have needed daily grace from God.* 10,000 words could not fully explain what has been going on, so we will include some photos as well.

Cleaning Preparation for Students (Jan 31 - Feb 9)

In the week before the students arrived in early February, Deborah and Carl realized that the residences were not properly prepared for the students. Since a permanent Rec-

Deaconess students using two books donated by Southern Illinois District for the courses "Deaconess Skills" and "Contemporary Issues in Ministry to Women and Children." Despite all the emergencies, we are teaching!

tor's administrative assistant has not yet been hired this annual task was forgotten. Carl and Deborah are "housemasters" and needed to make sure this was done. During the few days before classes and the first week of classes we worked with students to purchase supplies and oversee a good cleaning of the dorms. Since it had not been done for two months roaches had settled in. Rugs had to be trashed and some appliances re-purchased. After 10 days,

a week into classes, the houses were much better. We started teaching classes on Feb 5th.

Conference in Ghana (Feb 9 - Feb 16)

The Saturday the cleaning was accomplished we left for Ghana for a week of Theological and Seminary conferences. The Theological conference of Lutheran partners in Africa had not met for five years. (We had arranged for substitute instructors

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Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Sign check memo “Support of Rockrohr Family.”

Gifts can also be given securely online through the LCMS website, on our online giving page at www.lcms.org/Rockrohr.



The 2012 Rockrohr Mission Annual Report

is available online at www.rockrohr.net on the newsletter page link. If you have not seen it yet you are invited to explore its articles. It gives an overview of the need for church worker training in Africa, explains our fundraising and recaps 2012 as well as envisions plans for 2013. And check out the map: *The True Size of Africa!*

God's Graces

(Continued from page 1)

for that week.) We met many old friends in Ghana from our work there in 1993-98 and met many new people from all around Africa. We were also impressed to see the newest of four Lutheran day schools in Ghana.

Presentations were made on the topic of the Holy Spirit. The African theologians had many insights with questions and discussion offered by their colleagues. The meeting of African seminary representatives gave us very helpful information on the state of pastoral and deaconess training. We were surprised to learn that LTS has the only currently functioning residential deaconess training program among the International Lutheran Council seminaries in Africa.

Car Accident (Feb 17)

The very day after returning from the Ghana conference, Carl was involved in car crash. Carl was not seriously injured, but our VW Caddy was not drivable. We learned about South African police reporting and insurance procedures very quickly! Thankfully, our



Our car is the red VW Caddy. Carl was not hurt seriously. The Caddy is in for repairs until March 28. The accident was one block away from LTS.

insurance is good and the Caddy repair should be completed by March 28. We have a rental in the meantime.

Lost License and Mail Strikes (Feb 17 to present)

Because of the accident and needed car rental we found out that Deborah's International Driving Permit is lost. If she had had the accident instead of Carl, insurance may not have covered the costs. Both permits needed replacing soon so we had been in the process to get them replaced. South African postal services have been on strike three times in the last year, so prompt delivery is not reliable. The first application we sent to Deborah's mother was lost in delivery. Deborah then came up with a plan to email scans of photos and applications

and return the driving permits through friends at the US embassy. A good plan, but we still don't have the new licenses. Please pray for that!

Three Trips to See Ted, One for Appendectomy (Feb 1-3, March 1-3 and March 5-10)

In the past seven weeks we planned to see Ted at boarding school twice. Once for a required “new parents” weekend when the boys can see parents again after the first two weeks. During that trip we also collected the updated school visa which had to be issued locally. A second time we visited Ted to see him play basketball. The game was on March 2 and that was a nice trip.

On March 4, the day after we returned from seeing Ted, we received a call

God's Graces

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from the Sisters (nurses) at the Sanatorium at Ted's school telling us he had fallen ill. On March 5, after two days of doctor's visits, it was determined Ted needed his appendix removed. We made the six hour return trip to Hilton College that afternoon so that we could take Ted to the local hospital on March 6 at 6 am.

We were required to make a "prepayment for surgery" since we don't have local insurance. (Our U.S. insurance will reimburse us later.) We are thankful the surgery went well. Ted did not appreciate all the needed tubes and hoses stuck into him, but he recovered as expected. We spent three additional recovery days with him in a local guest cottage with a kitchenette, relaxing and fixing favorite foods.

Ted resumed classes at his boarding school on March 11, and he is healing well.

Armed Robbery at LTS

Having just returned from the appendectomy trip, in classes on Monday we learned that there had been an armed robbery



Ted after his appendectomy surgery on March 5 at St Anne hospital in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. He is smiling because all the tubes are removed!

on campus on March 8. Deaconess Grace Rao from St. Louis was teaching two-week intensive courses to the part-time deaconess students. These ladies were staying in the Hokaai House that was recently purchased. The armed robbers broke into the house and stole phones and money from two sleeping students and they confronted another student who was awake. No student was hurt.

Obviously, on Monday morning the students were unsettled. There have been occasional thefts at LTS, but never an armed robbery on the campus itself. So this past week has been full of discussion and activities surrounding that event. Police in South Africa do not always arrive, but the seminary does employ an

armed guard emergency service. Security in South Africa is not something you can assume; one must plan out security measures in advance.

Courses Being Taught

Yes, we are teaching, too! Our courses are going well despite our planned absence to Ghana, surprise absence for Ted's appendectomy, and the armed robbery.

We are well, but a bit worn out these days. We appreciate your prayers. Every prayer for safety and security is real and true each day. Each day that we can teach and learn a bit more with our students is a gift of God. Thanks for your support and God's peace be with you!

Thank you!

- To the Southern Illinois District of the LCMS for providing text books for LTS pastoral and deaconess students.
- To Deborah's mother, Carol Roth, for numerous messages, errands and tasks accomplished for us in the US the past weeks.
- To Susan Collins, LCMS Logistical Specialist, Missionary Services, for assistance in securing insurance pre-authorization for Ted's surgery.
- To our continued and new financial supporters the last two months.
- To St. Paul Lutheran Church and School (Farmington Hills, MI) for printing and mailing our newsletter in the U.S. We understand this issue was assembled and envelopes stuffed by the St. Paul Girl Scout Troop.
- For all your prayers on our behalf.

Deaconess Insights: The Hurting Among Us



The combined deaconess classes of Deaconess Deborah and Deaconess Grace Rao (not all shown) received a lecture on human trafficking from a lady once caught in the trade. She is now a Christian and is free, pursuing a career.

What is a deaconess?

An article by Deborah "An Introduction to Deaconesses and Their Work" is available at our website, www.rockrohr.net. Click on the "Mission Information" link on the left hand side of the home page.

One of the classes our residential deaconess students are taking this term is "Contemporary Issues in Ministry to Women and Children." The goal of this course is to take a closer look at a number of current topics where the mercy work of the church through the deaconess can intersect with pain and suffering, bringing physical comfort and eternal hope to people loved by Christ.

We have spent much of the first quarter working through Richard Eyer's *Holy People, Holy Lives* (CPH, 2000), which provides an excellent basic introduction to Christian Ethics. From this launch point we are now beginning to examine such issues as teen pregnancy,

women in prison, and adult day care. In the second quarter students will be conducting guided studies and reporting to their classmates on the topics of caring for orphans, HIV/AIDS, abortion, women in distress, and child abuse.

One topic that is often under-reported is that of human trafficking. A good introduction to this topic is provided in the opening essay of the Roman Catholic journal *Concilium*, which devotes its entire August 2011 issue to the topic of human trafficking. Students learned that trafficking is a type of modern-day slavery that affects 12-27 million people worldwide. It can take such forms as forced labor (in factories or farms), bonded labor, child labor, sex trafficking, and even unwilling organ donation.

After considering this distressing topic in an academic sense, students were able to put a face to the issue through a guest lecture on March 13 by a woman who has escaped from trafficking. Because the part-time deaconess students were also on campus for their 2-week

course, we were able to include them in the class for this presentation.

Our guest lecturer explained that trafficking can happen to anyone, regardless of education or social status, and often involves deceit in the 'recruitment' process. One agrees to try something or go somewhere based on a false trust of the person who suggests it, only to belatedly discover the true reality of the situation.

Our guest lecturer also reminded the students that an important part of helping someone who is escaping trafficking is to avoid stigmatizing them further. Move on from the past. Rather than focusing on the past experience, focus on the person and let them feel loved for who they are and are becoming, and not an object of pity or remorse.

In fact, this is exactly how Christ treats each of us, isn't it? He loves each of us personally and individually; He puts our past behind us, makes us into new and redeemed creatures, and carries us forward in His grace and love.

Photos of Blessings



Old and new friends at the African Theological Conference in Ghana: Rev. John Kombat and Rev. Matthew Bisiani from Ghana listen to Rev. David Tswaedi from South Africa ask a question.



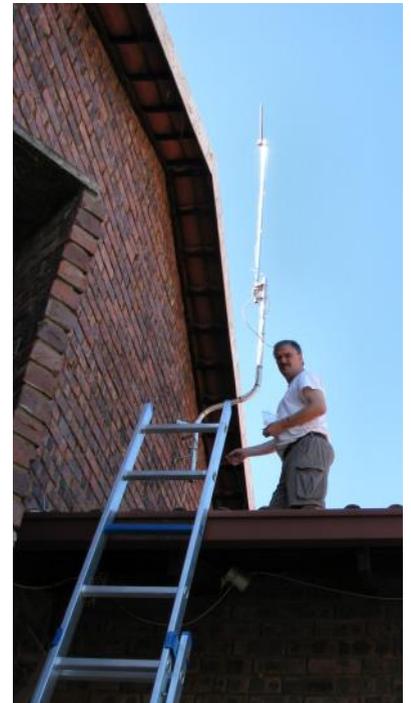
Deborah and Dr. William Schmuacher of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis view a new Lutheran day school in Ghana (Capacity 1000 students). We were happy to see this development of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ghana with whom we worked for five years, 1993-98. How things change!



Carl and Deborah enjoyed Ghanaian cooking at the theological conference as they conversed with Bishop Bolay (Liberia) and other Liberian delegates.



Ted (number 89, bottom left corner) plays basketball for the U14 A Team of Hilton College. They played Michahel House, their historic rival for over 100 years, on March 2. Four days later Ted had his appendectomy.



Ted helped Carl (and took this photo) to raise their home wireless broadband internet antenna another 2 meters to increase reception. (It helped a little.)

Ministry Information

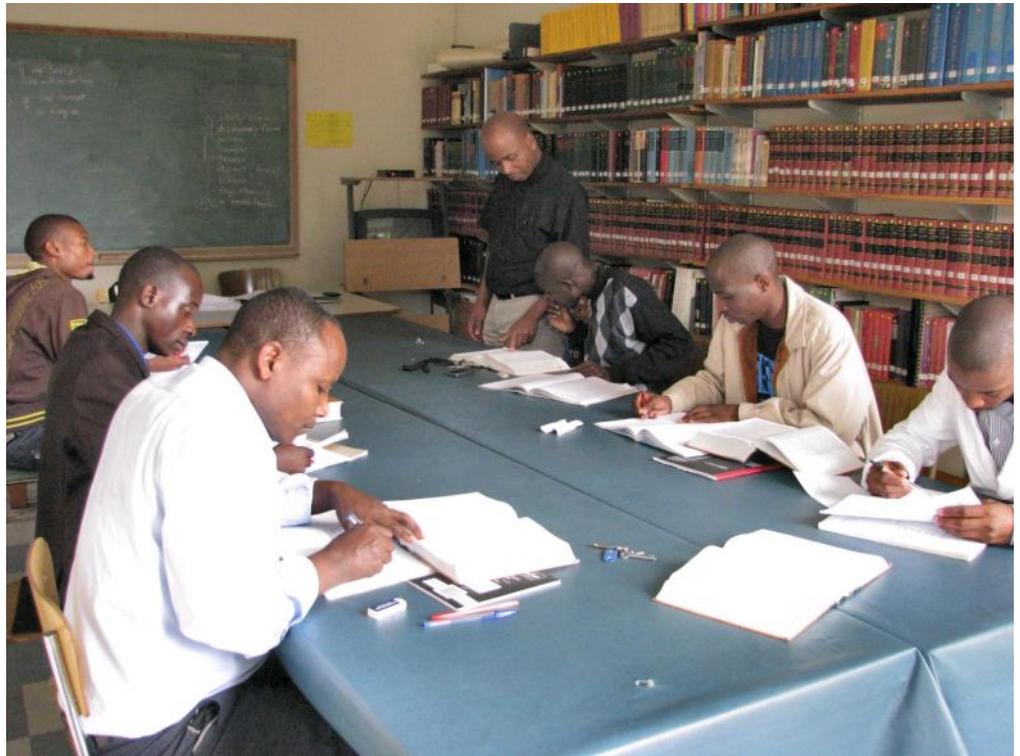
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Lutheran Theological Seminary Instructor Rev. Nathan Mntambo teaching Hebrew .

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Communicating with You

Communicating with friends and supporters is very important to us, but we are still learning the best way to do this from South Africa. Our recent disappointment that driving license applications we sent through more expensive private post never arrived in the U.S. and the frequent South African postal strikes make us wonder if some of the monthly thank-you's we are sending to supporters have also not reached their destination.

Here is our plan:

1. Our monthly newsletters will continue to be

sent by email to those with email addresses. Paper copies will be sent through U.S. postal service to those without email.

2. When we receive notification of new donors we will continue to send a thank you by email if we have an email address.

If we have no email address we will send out a batch of letters once per quarter via DHL to be re-mailed through U.S. postal service.

3. Our little monthly thank you's to continuing and frequent donors will have

to change to quarterly thank-you's emailed or mailed via DHL and re-mailed through U.S. postal service.

We fear the time and expense we spend on mailing monthly thank you notes might be wasted on lost mail. So instead, we will send out personalized thank-you's quarterly in a more reliable manner.

