

December
2023

KEEPING UP WITH KENYA

Monthly Newsletter



WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US?

We've been doing an Advent reading plan during this Christmas season. It is a short verse/passage each day but it has been good to meditate on how Christ brings hope, peace, joy, and love with His birth, life, death, and resurrection.



Here are some verses that stood out to us each week:

Hope

Romans 15:13
Psalm 130:7

Peace

Isaiah 9:6-7
Ephesians 2:11-15

Joy

Exodus 15:2-3
Isaiah 49:13

Love

1 John 4:9-11
Romans 8:38-39

MERCY Nairobi



We started off the Advent season with a Night of Worship on a Friday night. There were many new faces there, alongside our regular attendees. Allan did a great job presenting the Gospel for all to hear.

We have enjoyed making friends at church. Brian is in the bottom left corner. He is introverted but has such a fun personality. He became a believer during Allan's Jonah series in February. He is in our community group. We have loved the questions he is asking and being able to point him to Scripture to find the answers.



Our Advent series is called "Go Tell it on the Mountain". If you would like to listen to the sermons by Pastor Allan and Pastor Jordan, please copy the link below into your browser.



<https://www.mercynairobi.com/post/go-tell-it-on-the-mountain>

MERCY *house*

The women and children are still on their long break from school in between school years. Our goal as a Mercy House staff is to keep them busy and to try new things instead of just sitting around and watching tv the entire time.

Below you can see photos of them learning how to make pizza!



The women went home to their families or friends in the villages for about a week during the Christmas break. Kenyans are very relational and community is extremely important. Since I am currently in the States, I do not know how the visits went. We are hoping as a Mercy House staff that it was great for the women and children to see their family and friends but we also know some women were worried it would be a challenging time. It might have brought up difficult memories, former sin struggles, and more. This also gave them an opportunity to be out in the “real world” to put to practice the skills and strategies they have learned at Mercy House.



One of our teenage residents, J., accepted Christ as his Savior this summer. He has been going through discipleship with some men from the church. On Sunday, December 24, J. took his next step of faith and was baptized. Praise God for all the lives He is changing in Kenya!



WEST NAIROBI SCHOOL

December was a short month at West Nairobi School as classes and the semester ended early on the 15th. This semester gave me, Caleb, almost daily opportunities to share the gospel, encourage students with the historicity of the Bible, and share a love for history. Please join me in praying that the spring semester offers similar opportunities! December also allowed Rachel and I to return to the States to visit our families for Christmas. It was jam-packed with gatherings and activities. Having friends and family loving on us and helping us recharge has been a huge blessing.

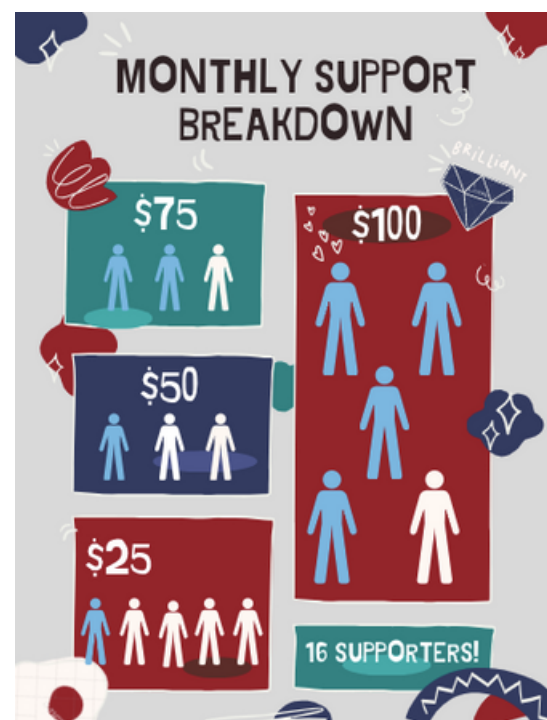
Now that I have taken a whole semester to acclimate to the classroom and a new culture, I will restart my Ph.D. courses in January. I am nervous about teaching while taking classes. However, I am ready to dive back in and finish up the second half of this program!

This chart represents support during my time at West Nairobi School.

The blue figures represent commitments and the light figures represent what is still needed.

Currently, there are 8 of the 16 needed supporters that have made commitments for the next two years. I am excited to see what God has planned for the other 8 or more.

If you or someone you know would like to give, please email me at calebmdarden@gmail.com



PERSONAL UPDATE



It is a long story, but we are on two different types of visas. Because of that, Rachel came back to the States almost two weeks before Caleb. It was difficult to be apart but it gave Rachel opportunities to see a few more friends and family members before Caleb arrived.



We enjoyed many sporting events while we were home. We went to a Checkers hockey game and a Carolina Panthers football game. We also had a viewing party with my family for an Alabama football game.



*merry
christmas*

This was our first Christmas together as a married couple. We enjoyed spending time with family and friends during the holiday season.



WHAT'S NEXT?!?! RACHEL (JULY 2024-JUNE 2026)

God was so good and faithful in late 2021-summer 2022 to provide through friends and family the funds for my original two-year commitment with Mercy House. I am fully funded through one-time, annual, and monthly givers through June 2024. Caleb and I have prayed thoroughly over my next opportunity in Kenya and God has led me back into the classroom. I will be teaching lower elementary at West Nairobi School starting in July 2024. I have committed to at least two years with the school. Caleb and I are both excited to teach at West Nairobi School as well as continue to serve at Mercy House and with Mercy Nairobi Church.

West Nairobi School provides a stipend for teachers but we are still encouraged to raise funds to supplement the stipend. The school is providing 40% of what my income is with Mercy House. Therefore, my goal is to raise the other 60% to maintain the income I currently have.

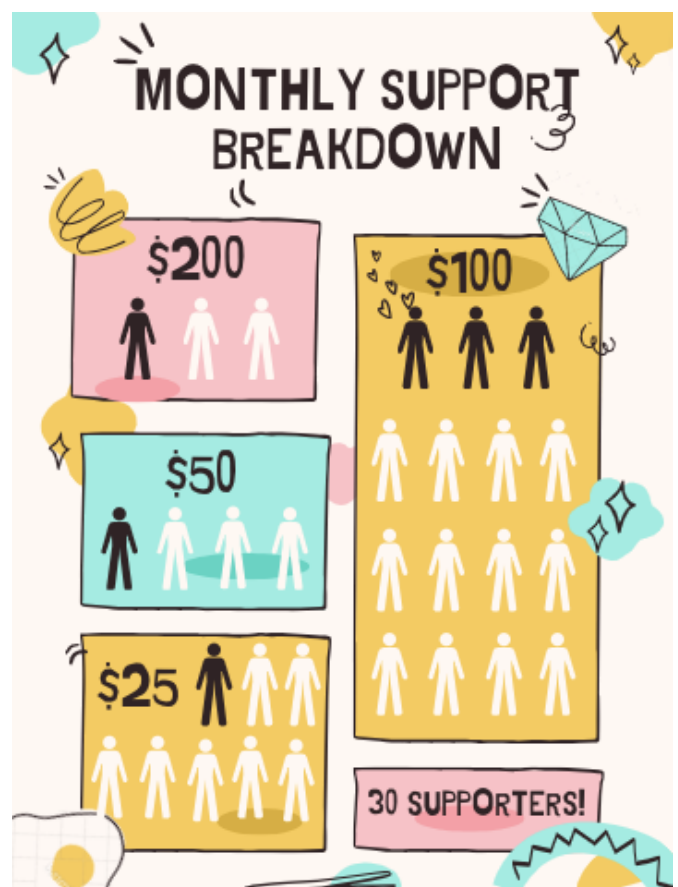
Would you pray about financially supporting me at West Nairobi School?

This chart represents support during my time at West Nairobi School from July 2024-June 2026.

The dark figures represent commitments and the light figures represent what is still needed.

Currently, there are 6 of the 30 needed supporters that have made commitments for the next two years. I am excited to see what God has planned for the other 24 or more.

If you or someone you know would like to give, please email me at rachelyoung826@yahoo.com



PRAYER REQUESTS

Rachel

-Strong immune system and health

-Reliance on God and not my own strength during this season of support raising

-Praise: Our marriage is strong and Christ is our foundation. Continue to pray for our marriage to be Christ-centered and healthy

Caleb

-He is halfway through his PhD program. Please pray for mental strength and endurance as he starts his first class in Kenya this semester

-Praise: Our marriage is strong and Christ is our foundation. Continue to pray for our marriage to be Christ-centered and healthy.

Mercy Nairobi Church

-Pray that the right people will be selected to serve our church as the first group of deacons.

-Praise: We are baptizing many new believers. Pray for church members that are strong in their faith will step up and disciple these new believers.

Mercy House

-The women and children as they start a new school year in January

-Continued opportunities to share with Gospel with the women and children

-Peace, respect, and healthy conflict resolution among the women