

March 2024

# KEEPING UP WITH KENYA

*Monthly Newsletter*



## WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US?

*Rachel*



This month I have continued my study through Romans 5-8. Paul does a great job explaining how Christ's sacrifice on the cross has freed us from the bondage of sin. God's love is the greatest love there is!

“Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all things we are more than conquerors through him who love us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” ~Romans 8: 35, 37-39

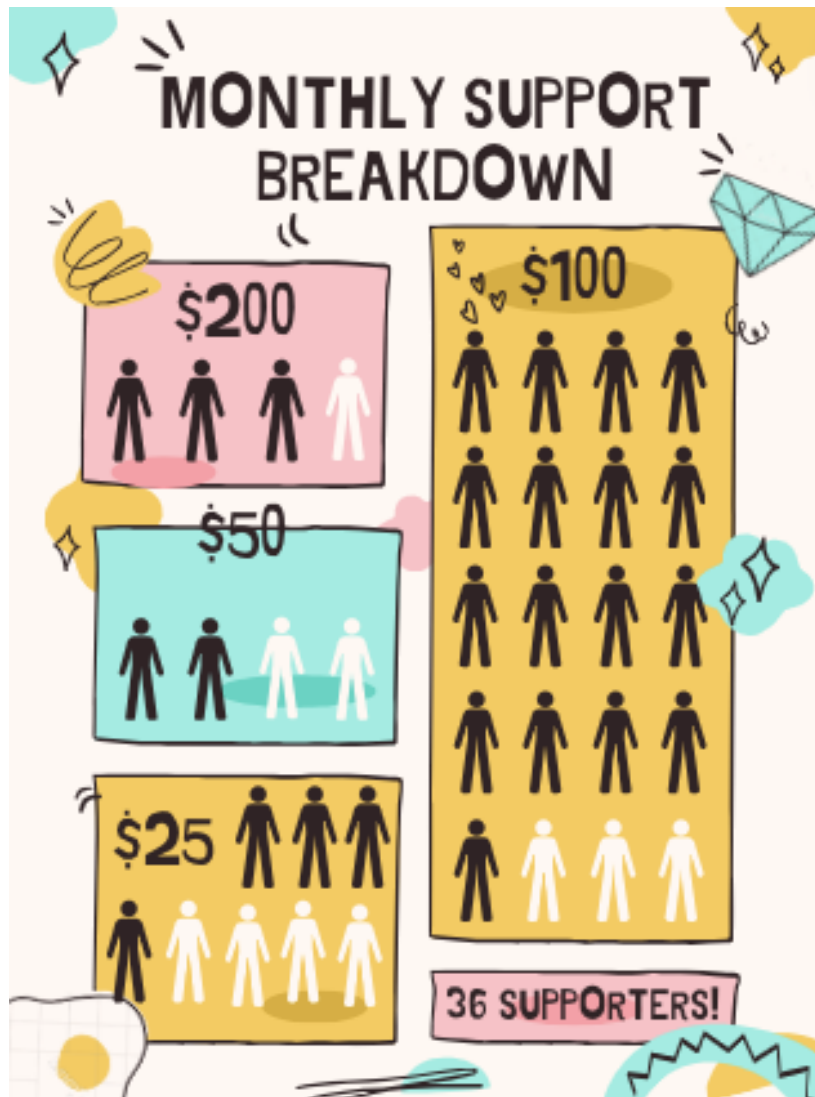
*Caleb*

This month has been a period of spiritual growth and reflection. Continuing with the reading plan, the journey through the books of Proverbs, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Matthew, and the beginning of Mark has been enriching. The completion of the Gospel of Matthew coincided beautifully with the Easter season, serving as a poignant reminder of Jesus Christ's resurrection three days after His crucifixion. Throughout this month, the recurring theme has been God's providence and plan for reconciliation with His creation. This month's reading has served as a powerful reminder of God's unfailing love and the promise of redemption.

Matthew 28:6: “He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.”

# SUPPORT RAISING UPDATE

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



Caleb and I have combined our support raising efforts because we are getting close to our goal. The chart to the above has been updated to represent our combined support goal during our time at West Nairobi School. The dark figures represent commitments and the light figures represent what is still needed.

Currently, there are **26 of the 36 (71%)** needed supporters that have made commitments. We are excited to see what God has planned for the other 10 or more. We currently have commitments for \$2,500 monthly. Our final goal is \$3,500 monthly, which means we are still praying for \$1,000 in monthly commitments.

If you or someone you know would like to give, please email us at [calebmdarden@gmail.com](mailto:calebmdarden@gmail.com) or [rachelyoung826@yahoo.com](mailto:rachelyoung826@yahoo.com).

# MERCY Nairobi



March has also been a busy month in the life of the church.

- ~Above, there are two photos from two schools where we had VBS.
- ~Below on the right, you will see us persevering through a power outage. Power outages are common in Kenya and I am so proud of our staff as they navigate us through the unexpected. Our worship leader had everyone still joyfully singing to the Lord!
- ~We are continuing through our Mark series. You can use the link below to access the sermons.
- ~Easter weekend was a success! There was a Good Friday service, Easter service, and 3 baptisms on Sunday. Praise God!
- ~There were 8 deacon candidates that were going through training. One person decided they did not have the capacity to serve the church as a deacon at this time. The other 7 were brought before the members on March 24 and have all been confirmed as appointed as the first deacons of Mercy Nairobi Church. They will serve a two year term.



<https://www.mercynairobi.com/post/come-follow-me>

# MERCY *house*



At the beginning of the month, we had a birthday party for all residents, children, and staff that had birthdays in the months of January and February. Caleb was able to join and everyone loved having him there.

Mercy House has officially moved into a traditional house. Being in town was convenient but not beneficial for teaching the women how to be independent in certain areas.

One area is transportation. When we were in town, they were able to walk everywhere which made timing simple. However, Kenyans usually don't live in town. Most Kenyans live on the outskirts and take transportation to get into town.

This includes waking up early, finding the matatu (bus) stage, standing in a queue (which by itself can sometimes take up to an hour), learning which matatus go where (there is not a bus schedule), how long it will take to get to the next stage (traffic is very congested), and finishing the journey with walking. There are other benefits to the move, transportation is just one example.

However, all of our residents have been through trauma so there are also challenges that come with a transition. In our first week we have seen regressions in the women and children including food insecurity, tantrums, potty training, and disrespect. Please pray for the women and children to build back the trust in us as we try to make the best decisions for them. I also ask that you pray for the staff to have patience and wisdom as we help guide the women and children through this transition.





WEST NAIROBI SCHOOL



On the 14th of March I got the opportunity to join West Nairobi School High School students at Harvard Model United Nations (HMUN). It is a four-day international relations simulation specifically designed for high school students. HMUN provides a unique opportunity for young delegates to immerse themselves in the world of global diplomacy and decision-making.



Rachel and I got to join the New Staff, though not so new anymore, on a trip to Browns Cheese Farm. Products made at the farm are all over Kenya. They include various cheeses, crackers, and ice cream. It was great to tour the factory, enjoy trying the different products, and have a delicious meal with some of the first friends we made at West Nairobi School.

This month, we had our second Spiritual Emphasis Week (SEW) here on campus! From stories and Biblical concepts told by Chris O'Shaughnessy, our SEW Speaker this week, to community service and Truth sharing, our faculty, staff, and students had a great week. Not only was it a time to hear God's Word, but our students also had the opportunity to sing, dance, and serve!



# PERSONAL UPDATE

Early in the fall, the High School Principal pulled me aside and asked if I would be willing to be the male chaperone for the French class trip to France. Naturally, I agreed with the condition that Rachel join. So, over spring break, Rachel and I got to join 18 high school students of various ages on a trip to Brussels, Belgium, and Paris, France. Though this trip included a lot of chaperone duties, it was a pleasure to see historical sights and have a lot of fun with the students. It was a lot of walking and included a lot of rain. It also allowed us to visit the Atomium, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame, Disneyland Paris, and the Palace of Versailles, among other incredible sights. We were blessed with fantastic tour guides and this opportunity to join students on their trip.



## Brussels, Belgium



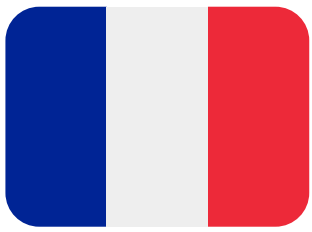
**The Atomium**



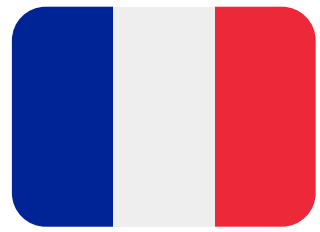
**Chocolate Museum**



**Train Fun!**



# Paris, France



**Eiffel Tower**



**Notre-Dame**



**Arc de Triomphe**



**Preparing for the Olympics**



**Palace of Versailles**



**The Louvre**



**Disneyland Paris...also Caleb's first trip to a Disney park**

# PRAYER REQUESTS

## Rachel

-7 weeks remaining at Mercy House, smooth and healthy transition for myself, staff, residents, and children

-Good health (still fighting off cold and flu viruses)

-Support raising

## Caleb

-Current PhD class, 5 weeks remaining in this current class

-8 weeks left of school, wants to finish strong with student relationships and curriculum pacing

-Good health (had gout this month)

-Support raising

## Mercy Nairobi Church

-7 deacon candidates as they start serving the church

-College Bible Study that is starting in April

-Pastor Allan will be in the States in April to meet up with supporters and preach at supporting churches

## Mercy House

-Transition will be healthy and beneficial for residents and children

-Getting students registered at new schools that are close to the new house

-Staff members to have patience and wisdom with residents