

Jan./Feb.
2025

KEEPING UP WITH KENYA

Monthly Newsletter



WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US?

Rachel

At the beginning of 2025 Caleb and I started a reading plan called “The Bible Recap” with a few of his family members. We have read Genesis, Job, Exodus, and Leviticus during these two months. I love reading the Bible chronologically and getting to look at the story of the Bible as one big storyline. God revealed a lot to me through the book of Exodus. In Exodus 22 God is giving Moses some of the laws and I noticed God’s compassion for people in the way these laws were written.



“You must not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.” Ex. 22:22

“If you ever take your neighbor’s cloak as collateral, return it to him before sunset. For it is his only covering; it is the clothing for his body.

What will he sleep in? Ex. 22: 26-27a

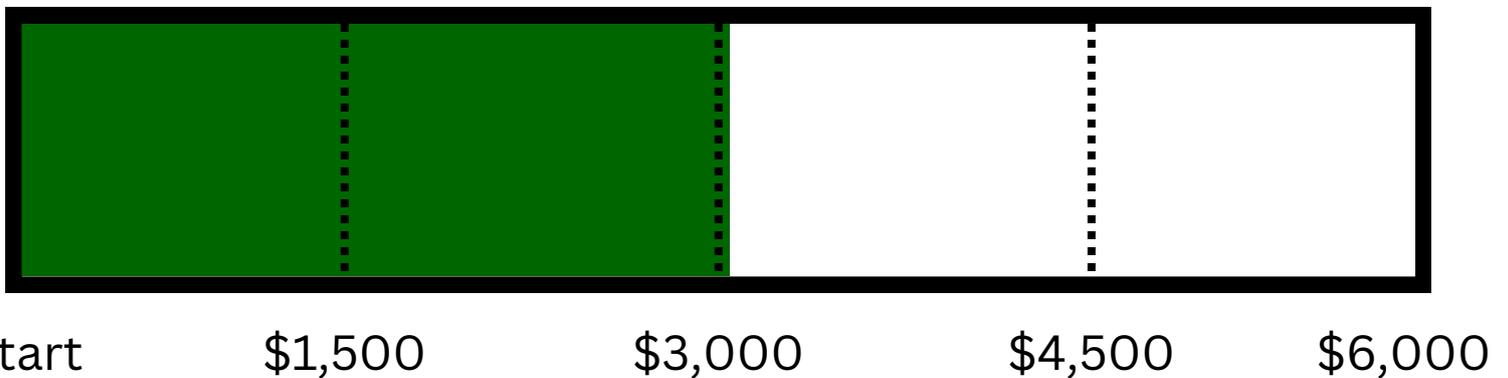
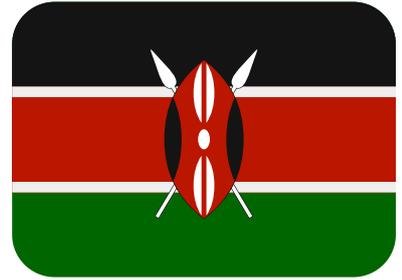
Caleb

Along with The Bible Recap, I have been finishing the in-depth study of Paul’s epistles that my accountability partners and I started early in the fall. Paul’s letter to the Romans has been really encouraging because it explains the gospel so clearly and reminds me that God’s grace is enough. It’s also been a great reminder that we don’t have to earn salvation—it’s a gift, which brings so much peace and assurance.

“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 8:38-39

Darden Support Raising Progress

Our current goal is to reach \$6,000 through one time gifts. The money will go towards Caleb's visa so that he can continue doing ministry in Nairobi and also give him the time he needs to dedicate towards writing his dissertation. The chart below represents the progress towards this goal. There is currently \$3,000 contributed to the goal!



Donations can be made with the following steps:

1. Go to www.nics.org/donate.
2. Choose the amount you'd like to donate and select "One Time"
3. For the "Designation" box, choose "School Projects."
4. A comment box will pop up that says "Staff Name or Project Number." Type in "Caleb and Rachel Darden-Project #004425".
5. Complete the billing and payment information. You can use either a debit/credit card or a checking account.
6. Check "I'm not a robot."
7. Select "Review." If any information is incomplete or missing, it will not go to the next page. Make sure to go back to the top of the form and correct any incomplete/missing data.
8. Review the donation and choose "Donate."

PERSONAL UPDATE

The past few months have been a whirlwind for us, but we are finally starting to see light at the end of the tunnel. In January we discovered mold in our apartment in Kileleshwa, which has likely been a major factor in the chronic health struggles we've been facing. After realizing the impact it was having on our health, we began the long and exhausting process of moving to a new place where we can heal in a healthier environment.

Thankfully, we found a new doctor who helped us get rid of the mold in our systems and who has been helping us finally get to the root of our chronic health issues. Rachel has been diagnosed with lupus, and Caleb has been struggling with colitis—both conditions that have made everyday life challenging. We feel hopeful that true healing is possible.

On the plus side, our move has brought us much closer to work, which has been a huge blessing. We're now able to be more involved in school activities, and it's been great to engage more with our students and the school community outside the classroom.

We appreciate your prayers and support as we navigate this transition and continue on the path toward better health. Rachel's journey with lupus could potentially takes months to get relief from the pain and fatigue and then years to reach remission. But we are thankful remission is a possibility.



The top photos include some of the mold, packing up, and saying goodbye to our first home as a married couple.



The bottom photos include our first day in our new apartment and starting to get settled in.

God has been so good to us, providing much-needed rest in the midst of such a busy season. We were blessed with a break both right before and right after our recent move, allowing us to recover and settle in well. In January, we took time to relax in Naivasha, where we explored Hell's Gate National Park, taking in its stunning landscapes and wildlife. One of the highlights was soaking in the natural hot springs—an incredibly refreshing and rejuvenating way to start the new year.



Then, in February, we finally made it to Kenya's coast for a long weekend, enjoying the warm waters of the Indian Ocean at Diani Beach. This trip was full of new experiences, from our first tuk-tuk ride to indulging in fresh seafood.

One of the best moments was sharing the gospel with our server on Valentine's Day. It was an unexpected conversation gone right. Through it all, we are reminded of God's faithfulness and the joy of experiencing His creation in new and beautiful ways.





WEST NAIROBI SCHOOL

It has been a busy and exciting few months as we have started the second semester. Caleb's Club, Model United Nations, recently attended the MUN event in Dubai, although Caleb couldn't join them. The school also celebrated International Day, honoring the 30+ nations represented within the student body. It was a vibrant day filled with exploration of various foods and crafts, showcasing the diverse cultures of the families at WNS.



The kindergarten and K4 class also went on a field trip together to the animal orphanage, where the students were thrilled to see peacocks, leopards, cheetahs, and more.



The 100th Day of School was another exciting event where everyone dressed up as if they were 100 years old and participated in numerous activities centered around the number 100, including reading 100 books as a class.



In addition, the Elementary Africa Celebration took place, with each class focusing on a different section of Africa. Kindergarten studied 16 countries of West Africa during January and February, and on February 12, all the elementary students came together to present their findings on stage, alongside showcasing their artwork and classwork.



Lastly, Science Day on February 21 was a hit, offering students the chance to explore a planetarium, interact with snakes, and witness our 8th graders perform exciting chemical experiments.

MERCY Nairobi

Mercy Nairobi just sent out an updated report . I have included it below!
We trust you are well in the Lord. We wanted to express our huge gratitude for your continued partnership for the sake of the gospel in Nairobi. Through your prayers, generosity, and encouragement we are proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus and able to do works of compassion in our city.

2025 Praise Report

- 7 Salvations: 5 during service and 2 during college gathering.
- 16 People in new believers class.
- 4 Students being financially supported to attend school: 2 in elementary school & 2 in High school.
- Averaging 214 Adults and Kids on Sunday Mornings.
- 8 Family groups meeting during the week
- Discipling over 900 students weekly at 2 primary schools & 1 high school
- 8 baptisms which included a few children



To the right you will see our Kileleshwa family group that we hosted and led since September 2023. In January, due to our move to a new area, we have multiplied that group into now 2 groups.

5 members of the Kileleshwa family group will continue to meet and grow together. Caleb, Maddie, and myself have been able to start a group in Karen which allows 3 additional church members to attend family group during the week.



MERCY *house*

In terms of Education Support, 17 students are currently receiving financial assistance for their education, including 1 college student, 6 high schoolers, and 5 elementary students. For Transitional Support, partial assistance continues for 4 women and their children who transitioned out last year. In January, full support was provided for 4 full-time residents and their children. February brought new changes, as 2 new residents and 2 new children joined Mercy House. Additionally, Growth & Outreach efforts are underway, with interviews ongoing for potential new residents.



The left picture shows the newest resident of Mercy House and her two children. Please pray for her transition as she adjusts to a new environment, roommates, and rules. Pray also for the established residents to welcome her warmly and be kind and accepting. While Caleb and I haven't had a chance to go to Mercy House and meet the new residents, we still get to see the 4 residents who have transitioned out, along with their kids, at church on Sundays. One resident in particular, J, and her daughter, N, have been getting closer to us. We sometimes sit together in church, and J will also text me updates on N's schooling and how she, J, is doing. It's been such a blessing to still be a part of their lives as they work towards complete independence.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Rachel

- Strength and energy as I continue teaching with fatigue and pain
- Wisdom as I learn what lifestyle changes need to be made for lupus
- Opportunities to continue having gospel conversations with my students

Caleb

- Healing and relief as I navigate colitis.
- Opportunities to share the Gospel with my students.
- Wisdom and opportunities to have more conversations with my Mormon student.

West Nairobi School

- Good candidates to apply for the positions we have open for next school year
- Wisdom and discernment for the leadership team as they hire new staff

Mercy Nairobi Church & Mercy House

- Wisdom & discernment to commission 2 elders before the summer
- Making decisions to move from one church service time to two times due to growing service attendance
- Mercy House staff as they conduct interviews and continue welcoming new residents