

March
2025

KEEPING UP WITH KENYA

Monthly Newsletter

WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US?

Rachel

This month I have read Numbers and Deuteronomy. It really stuck out to me when Moses lost the privilege to enter the Promised Land because he struck the rock for water. He had seen God be faithful and fulfill promise after promise, yet he doubted God in this moment and took a short cut. I too have seen God's faithfulness repeatedly but still find myself sometimes taking short cuts. I pray that I will learn to wait patiently and trust His plan.



“You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.” Deuteronomy 13:4

Caleb

This month, I read through Joshua and Judges as part of our ongoing Bible reading. I was reminded of the battle cry that God gives, Moses echoes, and Joshua embraces as he steps into leadership. Joshua 1:9 declares, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” While it's tempting to apply this verse personally—and it certainly speaks to me—I found myself even more inspired by how this call to courage united the Israelites in battle as they fought to claim the land God had promised them.

Ephesians 6:10–11

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.”



WEST NAIROBI SCHOOL

Caleb had the opportunity to join the Harvard Model United Nations Club and the Harvard Model African Union, held at the United States International University–Africa campus. It was an exciting day filled with students from all over the continent! The event focused on developing key skills such as public speaking, negotiation, teamwork, leadership, and policy crafting, all while gaining a deeper understanding of African relations and the structure of the African Union.



To top it all off, Caleb joined the High School Student Leadership (HSSL) team in celebrating students who have been excelling academically this quarter. As a reward for their hard work, the HSSL took the students ice skating—a unique experience, and a great chance for Caleb to show off his skating skills on a rink right here in Africa!

This month, our elementary students participated in Reading Month! The focus was all about encouraging a love for reading, and this year's theme was March Madness.

We even did a bracket for books. Lower Elementary had a bracket with 8 books and "Wacky Wednesday" by Dr. Seuss came out on top as the overall champion!



One of the highlights of the month was Caleb joining the K5 class to help kick off and wrap up our Reading Month activities. We hosted a school-wide rally filled with fun reading-themed events, and we also held a Reading Night where parents had the opportunity to come and see their students in action—reading and sharing what they've learned.



MERCY *Nairobi*

This month has been filled with moments of celebration. We've had five more baptisms—praise God! Additionally, we've been blessed to host two teams from the U.S. With their support, the church has been able to expand its efforts in discipleship and evangelism, which continues to contribute to a gospel awakening in Nairobi.



However, this month has also brought some personal challenges for members of our church, and we are walking alongside them in these difficult times. Our worship leader, Eugene, tragically lost his brother, who was living in the U.S. and was later found to have been murdered. Eugene, originally from Burundi, has traveled to be with his family for three weeks. Please pray for Eugene and his family as they grieve and process this heartbreaking loss. In addition, one of our elder candidates has experienced the death of his mother-in-law, and his father-in-law is now ill. As a result, the family is relocating from Kenya to be closer to their loved ones. This leaves us with two remaining elder candidates. Please pray for this family and also for Allan as he continues to consider the two remaining candidates. These candidates have been preaching more frequently as we prepare for the church members to vote on them in the coming months.



Mercy House is filling up! This month, we've welcomed three new women. The first is a mother with a baby, the second is a mother with a baby as well, and the third is a mother with two school-age children. This brings our current total to seven women and eleven children.

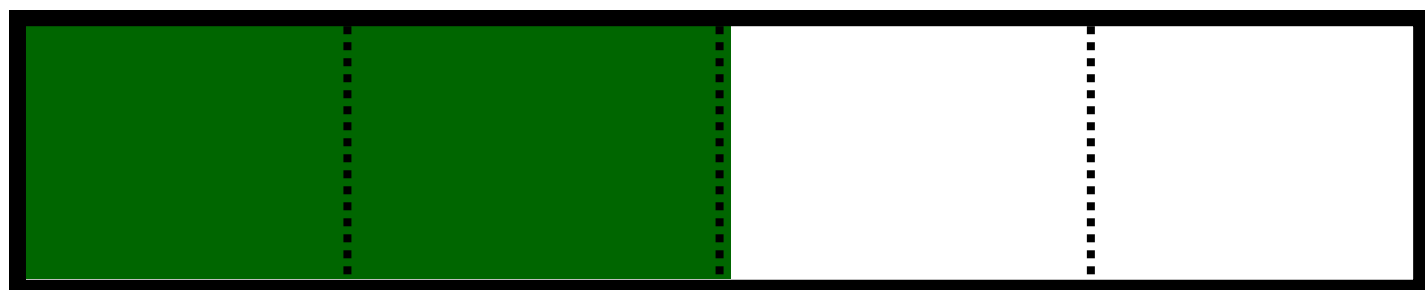
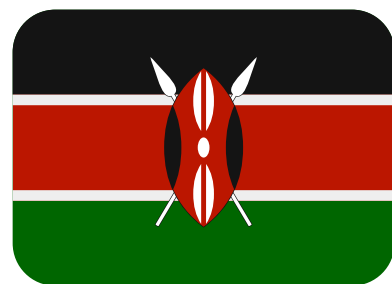
Please pray for these new women as they transition from life on the streets to a more structured environment. Adjusting to rules and boundaries can be challenging for both the matrons and the new residents. Pray also that these new residents—both the women and the children—will integrate well with the other residents as they settle into their new community.

April is a school break for Kenyan schools, meaning that all women and children will be in the house all day, every day. We all know how cabin fever can set in, so please pray for both the staff and residents during this time. Pray that the women will cherish this extra time with their children, that the staff will find more opportunities for gospel conversations, and that everyone will be able to be creative and have fun together.



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!



Start \$1,500 \$3,000 \$4,500 \$6,000

Donations can be made with the following steps:

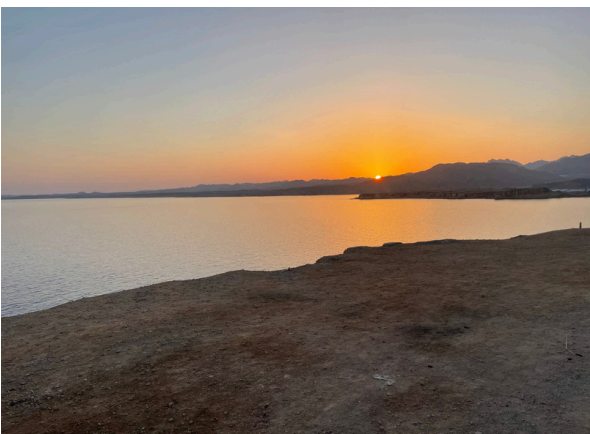
1. Go to www.nics.org/donate.
2. Choose the amount you'd like to donate and select "One Time"
3. For the "Designation" box, choose "School Projects."
4. A comment box will pop up that says "Staff Name or Project Number." Type in "Caleb and Rachel Darden-Project #004425".
5. Complete the billing and payment 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

We kicked off the month by spending a day with our goddaughter, Amali, while her parents were out of town for a wedding. It was a special time, helping out our friends and enjoying uninterrupted moments with Amali. We took her to the school pool, though she wasn't quite sure how she felt about it.



We had the opportunity to spend spring break in Egypt. The first half of the trip was spent on the coast in Sharm el Sheikh, providing a much-needed break after a busy few months of school. During our time there, we spent plenty of time at the beach and even went on a boat excursion to snorkel in the Red Sea. The picture below isn't one we took, but it's similar to the beautiful creatures we saw. We even had the chance to touch a jellyfish!



The second half of our trip to Egypt was equally wonderful but much busier. We took a day trip to Luxor, where we visited the Karnak Temple, the Valley of the Kings (including King Tut's tomb), the Avenue of the Sphinxes, the Colossi of Memnon, the Queen Hatshepsut Temple, Luxor Temple, a perfume and oil shop, and an herb and tea shop. The temples became a highlight of the trip for Caleb, while Rachel particularly enjoyed the perfume and herb shops, where we got to sample a variety of products.



Next, we spent two days in Cairo, where we visited the Pyramids of Giza, rode camels, explored the new Grand Egyptian Museum, took a dinner cruise on the Nile, wandered through a bazaar, and visited a cave where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus may have stayed on their way back from Egypt. We also had the chance to try many more traditional Egyptian dishes, including koshari, feteer, hawawshi, strawberry juice, and black tea. Everything we ate was delicious and truly authentic!



PRAYER REQUESTS

Rachel

- answers as we do Whole30 to figure out what foods trigger my lupus
- strength and energy to finish the school year
- contentment with our new apartment as we settle in and things are not a homey as our first apartment

Caleb

- Clarity and insight as we complete Whole30 in order to identify dietary triggers for my colitis
- Meaningful progress and continued opportunities to advance my dissertation research
- A strong finish to the academic year at WNS, with intentional moments to share the gospel

West Nairobi School

- wisdom for leadership
- hiring new staff members for next school year
- departing staff as they start preparing to move away in the next 2 months

Mercy Nairobi Church & Mercy House

- Eugene and his family
- Allan and the 2 elder candidates
- teams from the US that are preparing to come this summer and help with the work in Nairobi