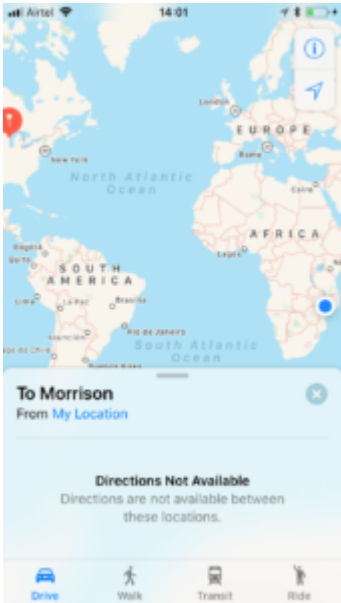


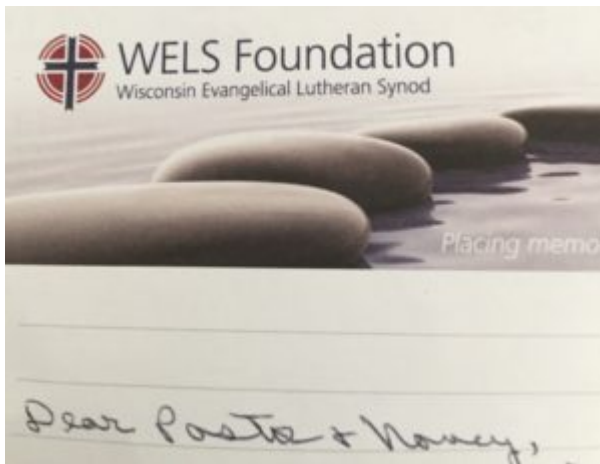
Letters from Home



WHEW! We had just gotten here to sub-Saharan Africa (see blue circle on world map below) after being “on the road” for 28 hours (of course, using a car, a bus, and planes). We had just succeeded in spending 5 weeks in North America to explain the work that our church body and the local African Lutheran churches are doing.

WHOA! Guess what we saw? In our barely used post office box in a currently dusty southern hemisphere capital city were three “letters from home” waiting from Lois, a fellow Christian from Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church whom we saw in person in the community where I grew up (see blue pin on world map below). They reminded us of our extended spiritual family. They represented how fellow believers keep us in their hearts, minds, and prayers from 9 thousand miles away and seven hours ahead. These handwritten letters unite us despite distance and time.





Upon returning home, we read one more correspondence, a “letter from our heavenly Father’s home”: from a place which we know only through faith in what Jesus has done for us. Heaven is not on Google Maps; it is harder to pinpoint on a map of this world or even of the universe. But this unique “letter from home” shows us that in the eternal Father’s habitation our heavenly Intercessor, Jesus Christ, holds us dearly in his heart, mind, and prayers.

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don’t forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this, you will experience God’s peace.”

Apostle Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Chapter 4, Verses 6,7

Paul originally wrote this amazing message nearly two millennia ago, but his letter soothes the spirits of all its readers throughout the ages. It seems incredible that within the extensive ancient Roman empire Paul was unaware of the “New World” across the wide ocean to the west where some of you live, or the large expanse of Africa south of the equator where others of us live. But incredibly, God delivered the letter to us all. Fellow Christians in Philippi, Macedonia, north of the African continent, faced enemies and discouragement—as do we all, no matter where we reside in the world. Paul himself was no “stranger to danger”: he wrote these words from a prison. Paul desired that the Philippians, and we too, have joy and steadfastness in our eternal Savior, who died and rose from the dead for us all and still works all for our good according to His purpose.

Just as physical “letters from home” bring us reassurance so far away from the writer, so also the Bible communicates the promise of God’s eternal peace in Christ despite having been delivered to us from so far away and long ago. The New Testament epistles like Apostle Paul’s letter to the Philippians have been translated so that they transcend countless language barriers. Thus, African Christians, living and working away from their “kwathu” (home village) also know God holds their lives in His loving hands. Here is the same section of God’s eternal holy letter “Buku Loyera” in Chichewa, one of the popular local African languages, “Kalata ya Paulo Yolembera Afilipi, mutu 4.6,7”:

“Musade nkhawa ndi kanthu kalikonse, koma m’mapemphero anu onse muzipempha Mulungu zimene zikusowani, ndipo nthawi zonse muzipemphe ndi mtima woyamika. Pamenepo mtendere wochokera kwa Mulungu, umene uli wopitirira nzeru zonse za anthu, udzasunga bwino mitima yanu ndi maganizo anu mwa Khristu Yesu.”





Let us continue to pray for the families of future workers of the church studying at Lutheran Bible Institute in Lilongwe, Malawi as well as those at the Lutheran Seminary, in Lusaka, Zambia, who move to new locations because of their desire to spread the gospel in their own countries for their own people. Ask God to comfort them as they live, study, raise children, and prepare for called ministries in the near future.

Also keep the current Lutheran Church-Central Africa Malawi Synod and Zambia Synod pastors and their families in your prayers as they live away from their extended families or support network of their youth. Pray that God moves the African congregations to give financial and emotional support to their called workers who faithfully forward messages from God's Word.

We entrust ourselves, the American missionary families, to God's loving care. We enjoy close fellowship with our extended missionary family in Africa, but we also have adult children who live, work and study in other places around the world. God assures us that he knows all our needs and will provide for us in the best way possible. No matter where we live, we ask him to give us humble, thankful hearts and a willingness to share our lives and talents with our African brothers and sisters in Christ. Please keep us safe, take away our fears, and let us know a lasting peace through Jesus Christ. Until we all reach our heavenly home, let us continue to

deliver the best “letters from home”—God’s Word. In the name of Jesus, let us pray and say: “May this be so!” Amen.



Nancy Roebke lives in Malawi. She and her husband John moved to Lilongwe, Malawi in June 2017. Since May of this year they reside in Blantyre, Malawi, 5 hours south where John equips Malawian pastors to connect Lutheran Christians with their Savior and each other through the LCCA’s Publications program. Bible-based publication work is also sponsored across Africa and around the world through WELS Multi-Language Publications.