



they will See and Understand

ISAIAH 52:15; ROMANS 15:21

SPRING 2022

Hi from Northfield, Minnesota! So much new and so little space to convey all the changes for our family. I'll try to summarize and then expound on a few points...

1) We are enjoying being **homeowners**, thanks to the help of our family. Elijah's dream came true when they started their second year at a school for the first time. We are now members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Northfield.

2) **We desperately miss Sierra Leone.** Our friends and colleagues packed up and closed our house and handed it back to the landlord. Having only ever evacuated our home and never left as planned, this was a painful close to a 7-year chapter of service. Thank you to those who have shed tears with us and prayed for us.

3) The **Themne Old Testament Translation Project** is thriving and progressing well. Thanks be to God! We will continue to keep you updated even though Ruthie no longer advises this project.

4) Ruthie accepted a position both as **Archive Curator and Exegete for the projects in Tanzania, particularly the Kerewe Translation Project.** These roles can be performed from Minnesota. More information to come!

5) Josh is working on a farm and hopes to move into an IT role at the end of the year. Please pray for the right opportunity for him that will provide for our family so Ruthie can continue with Bible Translation.



WHO WE ARE

The Wagner Family serves with Lutheran Bible Translators; first, several years in Sierra Leone working alongside the Themne people in Translation & Scripture Use; and now as Archive Curator and Exegete for the Kerewe Bible Translation Project in Tanzania.

Making God's Word accessible to those who do not yet have it in the language of their hearts. (LBT's Mission)

TIMELINE

- APR** Meetings with LBT and evaluate returning to work
- MAY** Ruthie back to work with LBT as Archive Curator and Exegete for the Kerewe Translation Project in Tanzania; orientations to roles
- JUN** Elijah's 10th on 21st
- JUL** Isaiah's 8th on 9th; Concordia Mission Institute / LBT meetings 10-16th
- AUG** Ruthie's 36th on 6th

TAKE ACTION

JOIN our "Wagner Updates" group on Facebook! This is where we update most frequently.

[facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates](https://www.facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates)

GIVE to "Wagner Ministry" online or by mailing a check. Please contact us or LBT if you'd like to set up automatic giving.

PRAISE for doctors and therapists involved in the care of our family. We rejoice in the comfort we have through Jesus. Praise for ongoing progress in the Themne project.

PRAY for the Themne translators as they press on in this arduous task. Pray for LBT colleague Amy Formella as she helps with advising. Pray for Ruthie as she starts her new roles.

CONTACT/SUPPORT

✉ Josh-Ruthie.Wagner@LBT.org

📘 [facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates](https://www.facebook.com/groups/wagnerupdates)

📞 612-433-1199 (call or text)

🏠 LBT will forward "Wagner" mail to us.



Designate "Wagner Ministry"

PO Box 789

Concordia, MO 64020

800.532.4253

www.lbt.org/give

WHAT WE ARE GOING THROUGH

Our private Facebook group "WAGNER UPDATES" carries the most recent updates.

Accepting Loss: A friend in Sierra Leone shed tears with me, Ruthie, as we reflected that I've *never left well*. "Clearly you were set up to stay for a long time," she said. We were *settled*. Each time I've left has felt like throwing things in bags and running out the door, and I wasn't even able to do the packing myself. Two evacuations were postpartum (during Ebola and with Lizzie's traumatic birth/tumor), another was in a medivac jet while Josiah's whooping cough kept stopping his breathing, and for the fourth, I'd been so sick for months that I could hardly get out of bed. All of these times we *desired* to stay, at least on some level, but *had* to leave. In the end, we know that He led us in and He has led us out. **Blessed be His name.**

Many thanks to colleagues and friends in Sierra Leone who used WhatsApp to painstakingly pack our house to hand back to our landlord. They have been sending luggage back via folks who are traveling back to the US. What a bittersweet process.

Are you new to Wagner Updates? Please introduce yourself and contact us if you have any questions about our ministry.

RECURRING SUPPORT

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!

100%

Our present challenge: Josh had planned to travel to Sierra Leone in September to clear out our house himself. But PTSD and OCD alongside his ADHD had become *severe*. The day before his trip to Sierra Leone, he had the first of three experiences of massive overwhelm that left him ineffective at managing even basic routines. It has been a scary time for us, and we were both on disability until Ruthie accepted this new position with LBT. Our focus has been on our kids and rebuilding healthy routines so that we can again serve as He wills.

OUR MISSIONARY STATUS WITH LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS (I.E. WHERE YOUR SUPPORT IS DIRECTED)

Ruthie is still a missionary with Lutheran Bible Translators, living on the support of friends, family, and churches. Josh is considered a support volunteer of our ministry, and he is looking for work. Josh is working outside of LBT for now. A pastor friend from our church responded to our grief and sense of guilt with not being "productive" by our standards. He said, **"We commissioned and sent you. Now we will take care of you."** **queue buckets of tears, right?!**

Each month we hoped and prayed that our support would hold on through our recovery, and we are humbled to say that it has. We don't deserve *your love and support*. Clearly you are responding to your own calls from the Lord. Our thanks is not enough. May He repay your kindness to us. To those few who have moved your support elsewhere, please know that we completely understand. Also, we apologize to those whose messages and emails to us have remained unanswered.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR OUR FAMILY?

Ruthie accepted a position as 1) Archive Curator, overseeing the checking, filing, and sharing of materials in the care of LBT. And as 2) Exegete for Tanzania projects, which will be done remotely for now. She is starting by combing through training resources to compile lesson plans for video recordings which can hopefully be used by multiple teams of translators in Tanzania. Josh is considered a support volunteer of our ministry, and he is looking for work.

THE THEMNE TRANSLATION PROJECT

The project is in good hands. In fact, the Themne translators and project are frequently used as models to assist other language projects. The picture below is of Themne Translator Mr. Kamara addressing and training a group of neighboring Loko language speakers. *May God hold them and the work in the hands of capable translators, the Bible Society of Sierra Leone, and my dear friend Amy Formella (LBT Translation Advisor). See the graph below for specific progress!*

May the Lord bless and protect each one of you. Thank you for your tremendous generosity and care for our family. We have received so much comfort as God has used His Spirit with and through many of you. Here's to another adventure!

♥ Ruthie & Josh Wagner

Elijah (9.5), Isaiah (7.5), Josiah (6), & Elizabeth (4.5)
Missionaries with Lutheran Bible Translators



PERCENTAGE COMPLETED OF EACH STAGE OF THE THEMNE OLD TESTAMENT PROJECT • GOAL: 2026				
STAGE 1 - Drafting by Translators	STAGE 2 - Checking by Translation Team & Advisor	STAGE 3 - Reviewing by Community	STAGE 4 - Checking by Translation Consultant	CURRENT PERCENTAGE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROJECT
98%	72%	64%	27%	75%