



Lutheran Bible  
Translators

...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Eph 4:12

# Constructive Word

The Esala's Prayer Letter

September  
2022

## PRAY

- Pray for Sarah as she works with partners in PNG, Southeast Asia, Tanzania, and Botswana as they plan for 2023.
- Pray for new missionary Tiffany Smith who is preparing to go to Tanzania to support the Datooga project.
- Pray for Nathan and the Komba translation team as they continue to work through checking the Old Testament for accurate and clear meaning.
- Pray for discernment as we plan LBT travels this fall and look ahead to 2023.
- Pray for our family as we start another school year.

## CONTACT

[Sarah.Esala@LBT.org](mailto:Sarah.Esala@LBT.org)  
[Nathan.Esala@LBT.org](mailto:Nathan.Esala@LBT.org)

## Dear Friends,

Our vehicle rolled to a stop. Which way should we go? Technically, we were on a road, but without gravel or pavement or really anything “road-like,” the way forward wasn’t clear nor smooth, and there certainly was no sign pointing us to Lukale where we were heading. The surrounding landscape was akin to the setting of a Wild West movie set—flat, dry, and sandy with scrubby trees and grasses. There were no buildings along the way and few signs of life except for an occasional herd of cattle or goats with a Datooga shepherd looking after them.

I was with partners from the Lutheran Church of Tanzania exploring the area where we hope to initiate Bible translation work in 2023. Unlike some of our other projects, where a strong Christian presence has been established already, there are few Datooga Christians, and as we plan this project, I have the feeling that the road ahead of us will require careful navigation.

Bible translation is more than just “word A=word B.” It’s important for Bible translators to reach into the cultural background, the context, and religious traditions to discover appropriate word choice and meaning. The Datooga live quite differently than even many other Tanzanian groups so careful attention to these parts of life will be important. They are pastoralists (aka—shepherds like Abraham and Jacob from the Bible) who historically have wandered throughout parts of Tanzania and Kenya looking for good grazing for their herds. As a result of this lifestyle, they haven’t settled together in towns nor gained education or exposure to other ways of doing life. Their traditions and language are strongly intact, but they are also struggling as their traditional way of life becomes less sustainable. I’m anticipating that some of the “ideal” ways of doing Bible translation will be difficult, requiring patience and discernment.

**Join me in praising God for this opportunity for LBT to work with the Lutheran Church of Tanzania as they reach out to the Datooga and for the many people (including you!) who are partnering so that every person can hear the Good Shepherd’s voice in a language they understand.** I can’t wait for the Datooga to hear that voice too and to experience how Jesus has come so they may have life and have it to the full (John 10:10 NIV).

*Joy in the Journey - Sarah for Nathan too*



*A “road” cuts through this area where you see sheep grazing. The trees are thorn trees; Datooga use their branches to make “fenced” enclosures. Living conditions are difficult in this part of Tanzania, yet that blue sky makes me think of hope.*



## A Few Highlights from Sarah's June Tanzania Trip



**Clockwise starting from top left:** (1) The community review process is critical in Bible translation. Here groups are reading through and discussing texts from the Kerewe translation of John. The excitement of the community was palpable. (2) Holding this cute baby was my effort to help one of the moms during the review session. (3) I got to experience the joy of Tanzanian churches. The choirs were incredible! (4) I learned that people gave more than money at offering time. In this picture after the service, a church leader auctions off a cabbage that someone gave. The money paid for the cabbage is added to the offering, and someone goes home with an ingredient for lunch. (5) This group picture includes Tiffany and our Lutheran Church hostess Happiness. Two Datooga men got curious and joined our picture. Tiffany and I are wearing cloth bought at the Datooga market we were visiting, a gift from the Lutheran Church.

