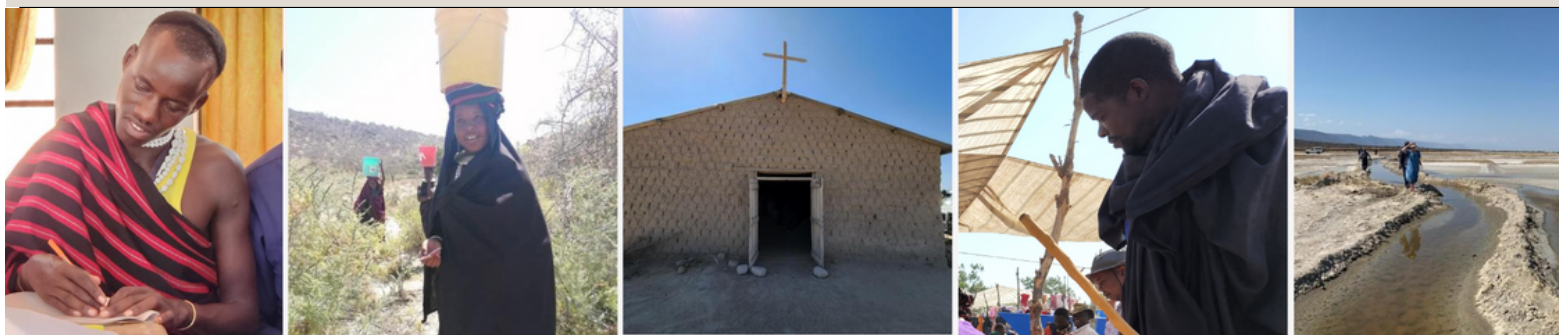


"My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved..." | ROMANS 10

Wapendwa Ndugu wa Kristo,
(Dear brothers and sisters in Christ)

You know the old saying, "When it rains, it pours"? Well, I've never felt that a saying more accurately describes the past month for me than that one. The end of March was supposed to be a two-day trip to Bukundi and Meatu, two small towns where many Datoga can gather. My colleagues and I wanted to follow up with the attendants from our workshop in February (mentioned in my last newsletter). However, it's rainy season here in Tanzania, so many rivers between Meatu and Bukundi are flooded and we were unable to reach our destination. That week opened my eyes to how limited travel can be when most people do not own vehicles or have good road maintenance. The bright side is that we are rescheduling the meeting for June. The trip wasn't all-for-not, as we were able to meet with some important personnel in Meatu, such as the district commissioner and district general. As we begin to plan a project it is important that we keep government officials in the loop - their approval and cooperation is important for the foundation of our language programs.

Funerals and Weddings - talk about emotional whiplash! I'm noticing a pattern the longer I'm here in Africa: You can go weeks with very little activity, then all at once be overwhelmed with work or cultural experiences. When my team and I returned from our trip to Meatu, we immediately went to a visitation for the mother of our beloved Bishop of the SELVD, who passed away March 29th. The next 3 days was non-stop traveling and services for her, and since I had been traveling the first half of the week for work, I was exhausted by the time Friday came. We also went to a funeral for the daughter of a teacher just weeks before in March, so I was getting pretty funeraled-out. While driving to the burial early Friday morning, I began crying suddenly. It was the first time I've really cried since coming to Tanzania - crying from lack of sleep, lack of knowing how to process these new cultural experiences, and lack of Swahili vocabulary to express my thoughts and feelings to friends. Fortunately, I am surrounded by some of the most compassionate and loving people, so I didn't feel sad for very long. Although they didn't know why I was sad, they were still there to comfort me and try to make me feel at home.

After the somber atmosphere of funerals, I'm looking forward to experiencing a Tanzanian wedding for the first time at the end of April! A friend I've made at the school has invited me to be a guest, so I've spent the last few weeks dress shopping - apparently wedding attire in Tanzania has a very specific aesthetic. Turns out the actual wedding ceremony is just one part of weddings in Tanzania. There are engagement parties and a "Send-Off" for the bride in the weeks prior, not to mention a whole committee who plans and organizes the whole event. I've been hearing so much about the planning from my friends that now I'm excited to finally experiencing it all for myself. I'm especially looking forward to the dancing!



We successfully forded two rivers on our way to Bukundi, but this photo shows the third river and many travelers sitting or standing on both sides, left with no choice but to either turn back or wait 3-4 hours until the water subsided and they could safely cross.

It was fun watching people get creative with how they crossed the smaller rivers! (See photo next page)

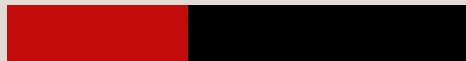
STAY IN TOUCH

EMAIL: TIFFANY.SMITH@LBT.ORG

If you would like to give to Tiffany's ministry, please mail all checks to Lutheran Bible Translators' headquarters at the address below, or give online.



2023 Funding:



39%



Vehicle Need Update

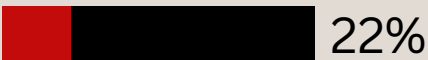
By the grace of God, I have been given permission by the SELVD to use a small car that belonged to previous missionaries. Right now, the car is being repaired, but when it is fixed I will be able to use it to drive to church or to Shinyanga when I need to. God provides!

Unfortunately, it is not the type of vehicle that can make the long trips to the villages, and I am technically just borrowing it from the church until I have enough funds to purchase my own.

Therefore, I continue to ask you to pray for this funding to increase and that God continues to provide, as He is already doing, in the meantime.

You can help by designating gifts to "Smith Vehicle Project" by check or online at the addresses on the bottom of this page.

Current Vehicle Funding:



Prayers and Praise

Philippians 4:6-7

Pray: For my new relationships in Mwadui to deepen and be authentic.

Praise: For the temporary provision of a vehicle!

Pray: For the conference in Thailand to go well and for safe travels for all attending.

Praise: For the teachers here in Mwadui who have helped me adjust to life here.

Pray: For my efforts in language-learning to be fruitful and enjoyable.

Speaking of dancing, in early April I invited some friends over for American food and to teach them some classic American dances. It was a discussion a friend and I had a while ago when I asked her if Tanzanians have special dances for special occasions. I told her that Americans have special dances for wedding receptions and parties. So six people joined me at my house one afternoon for lunch and dance lessons. It was so much fun! For dessert I made them funnel cakes because the ingredients are easy to acquire here, and it was a fun way to introduce them to a small part of American culture. Afterwards I taught them the Macarena and the Y.M.C.A, which they are still talking and laughing about today!

This year was my first Easter overseas and away from family. I went to the service at the Lutheran church here in Mwadui, then joined the pastor and his family for a late lunch in the afternoon. The service was similar to services at home, but it was about 3x as long and included the Lord's Supper, baptisms, and installation of new elders. I thought the addition of baptisms to the service was especially cool - it felt fitting to celebrate baptizing children as we also celebrated the Resurrection of our Lord, the entire reason we believe and baptize as Christians!



Left: Post-dance photo at my house. Right: My "family" Easter weekend!

Big news! In early May I'm attending a conference in Thailand for Scripture Engagement workers all over the world! A few months ago, I wasn't sure if this would be possible, but I checked on my permit processes and with my supervisors, who have permitted me to go. I am very excited about this opportunity!

This conference will expand my knowledge about how to use Scripture relevantly once it is translated into the target language, e.g. Creating phone apps, recordings, videos, booklets, etc. This is important for my role here in Tanzania, so I'm looking forward to seeing what I learn and what resources I can bring back for our team. I'm also excited to share my experience with you in my next newsletter, so stay tuned!

On the way to Thailand I will fly through Ethiopia, so I planned an extra two days of recreational time to spend with some LBT colleagues in Addis Ababa before I continue to the conference. The last time I was around familiar faces was February during the workshop, so I'm really excited to spend the weekend with friends and partners in this mission. I am a little worried about spending almost three weeks outside of Tanzania during this time but trusting that God will guide me in my language learning and relationship building when I return. Your prayers are appreciated in the meantime.

Time is really flying by here in Tanzania, and I am so grateful you've stayed connected with me through all the ups and downs. May God abundantly bless you as you continue to serve Him!



Left: Man carrying his bicycle overhead. Right: Me and Dr. Mono (assistant bishop for SELVD) before we ventured to cross the first river.