



July 2018

## CELEBRATE!

*Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. So I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.*

*Ecclesiastes 3:11-13 NLT*

This past month we have had a lot to celebrate. And, man oh man, Tanzanians know how to celebrate! Often times, celebrations here in Tanzania include music, dancing, and large meals of rice, beans, meat, and vegetables. The Tanzanian people truly exhibit Ecclesiastes 3:13 in celebrating the small and large things alike. It was so fun to be a part of it all. Let the celebration begin!

We were invited to be a guest of honor for the closing ceremony of the youth festival at our home church. The youth of the Lutheran Church participated in learning songs and dance, doing service projects in the community, and leading the Sunday church service for one week. On Sunday evening they gathered once more to finish out their learnings and invited us to be a guest of honor. This meant that we gave a short speech, participated in some activities, and donated to their fundraising. Because of our generous supporters, we were able to gift them with some items to start their church youth soccer team. They were very excited and thankful. Austin also plans to join in some games of soccer with them. We ended the evening with a delicious feast and chatting with some of the youth.



We also attended the third class' graduation of the Right to Live with Albinism program. We love participating in this event because these ladies with albinism, who have spent three months learning to sew, are also so joyful



to have completed the program and to take what they have learned to their villages. The ladies prepared some beautiful songs to sing for all the guest in attendance and took time to celebrate when they received their certificates and gifts. Once again, we were able to sponsor a sewing machine and material for one of the ladies to take back to her village to continue her work. Then they ended the ceremony with lots of yummy food and sodas for all.

This month we celebrated and reflected on another year of life, as we celebrated Amber's birthday. We had a lovely lunch and cupcakes with the Funke family. We took a sunset walk around our neighborhood to reflect on the past year and dream for the next. And we ended the day by eating some of our favorite Indian foods from a restaurant in town and watching a movie.



On the 17th, we celebrated Amber's internship supervisor from Concordia University Texas and his family arriving in Tanzania to visit us. It was such a blessing to host the Youmans family and show them the work that is being done around Shinyanga. We loved gathering together with them around our dining room table for meals and chatting with them late into the evenings, which always included lots of laughter.

While the Youmans were here, we visited Buhangija and Dr. Jake Youmans used his gift of making balloon animals to celebrate with the children living at this government safe center for children with albinism and special needs. The kids were wide eyed and anxious to get their hands on a balloon animal. We spent a while there making sure that each child was able to receive a balloon animal. The children were overjoyed and immediately began to play together in creative ways with their balloon dogs, giraffes, and elephants. It was quite the party!



Lastly, Austin and I want to take the time to thank and celebrate YOU, our faithful supporters. We couldn't do this without you. Thank you for making it possible for us to continue our ministry here in Tanzania. Thank you for the sacrifices you make and the generosity you pour out! And thank you for joining God's great adventure through supporting this ministry.

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**Prayer Requests**

- Thanksgiving for joyful celebrations this month, opening doors here in Tanzania, safe travels for the Youmans family, and the generosity of our supporters.
- Productive meetings with workers in the Lutheran diocese about future ministry opportunities.
- Continued progress on our letter to work in Buhangija.