

Message #5. Kenya- Travels in Kenya and Thanksgiving - Nov 21-Dec 1, 2024

When I get caught in rain storms during piki rides, we stop under the shelter of a local shop and wait for the rain to cease or lessen before finishing the journey. I get off and go by foot across areas on the road that are badly washed out or dangerous. On Thursday the 21st, I went to Malava on my way to see Getry Agizah at her home in Matsakha. I found Getry at a meeting in Malava, so met there instead, to make plans for the group of women who will be visiting Tanzania USFW next month.

Early on Friday the 22nd, Agneta and I went by piki to Butali and met Getry Agizah who drove us to Kaimosi for Graduation at Friends Theological College. We picked up Roselyn Mutsami on the way, who was receiving her advanced diploma in chaplaincy. It was a joy to see Ruth Sitati, the chairman of FTC Board leading the procession. Everyone was bedecked in colorful robes, some of which had been donated to me to deliver there. While waiting for the guest speaker to arrive, the other guests planted a tree, and then showed us guests the biogas digester that was recently installed. There are three ways the college is dealing with climate change- using biogas instead of cutting the beautiful trees of the forest, planting more trees, and using solar power for electricity. The main speaker was a minister of the county for environmental concerns, which pleased me, as one who received a MS degree in Environmental Education many years ago. I was invited to sit in the shelter for invited guests. John Muhanji led the commissioning of the graduates at the end of the program.



Ruth leading procession



Biogas digester



Happy Roselyne

Agneta, Roselyn, and I then spent the later afternoon and evening at Margaret Amudavi's house. Rosina Leparario also stopped by after her daughter had just finished at Kaimosi Girls HS. Since Roselyn and Rosina had missed the QW Team workshop, we had fun catching up. We also phoned Janet Mulamu, and Pamela Ngoya who had missed due to major illnesses.

On Saturday, I met with several Sunday School Teachers to get feedback about QREC Africa from some enthusiastic Sunday School teachers. Roselyne and Christine will visit the Uganda Sunday School Conference later in December.



Left to right:
Agneta Injairu
Roselyne Amugune
Christine Khamati
Josephine Sitati
Henry Shivachi

Roselyne, Agneta, and I then travelled back to Kakamega to Quick Mart grocers. Was grateful that Roselyne met a neighbor who offered a lift to Lubao, and Agneta and I discovered one of our regular piki drivers from Kalenda at the same store, so we travelled safely, despite the rain.

Sunday, Agneta and I went by pikis to Namirama Friends Meeting. It was fun to return to one of the villages where I lived for five years in the late 1970's, as headteacher of Namirama Girls Friends HS. Found one one of the old staff still alive in the village, and a good number of others who knew us at the local meeting for worship. I was interested that at the gate of the school, they listed some of the Quaker values, but were missing Peace, Integrity, and Stewardship of the earth! (Might have a non-Quaker heading the school at present)..



Walumoli and Agneta at new gate.



They list equality, tolerance, simplicity, and love

On Thanksgiving Day, I cooked up a special meal for Agneta and her family and the next day did the same for Elizabeth and her family. (a way to give my hosts a break from cooking every meal). It included turkey and green beans (both not common in Kenya), plus stuffing, cranberry sauce, pumpkin (winter squash) and Sweet potatoes.. Agneta also invited in several leaders of the local meeting. Then Haggai, their eldest son suddenly arrived from Thika, He is a land lawyer, and had had to come to western Kenya for his client's court case. Spending time cooking in others people's houses was a good change of pace from all the travelling I had been doing.



It poured rain as we gathered.



A few of those who enjoyed the feast

This past weekend, Agneta and I went to Lirhanda. The Kenya National Sunday School Teachers Conference was being held at my old school. I found the headmistress and encouraged her for repairing and improving

the school buildings, as well as displaying the correct list of Quaker values. However, the old mission house where I had lived two years was in terrible condition. Grass growing on the roof, doors and windows broken, someone had been having campfires on the verandah making the place black and smoky, and inside we found all kinds of books and documents thrown all over the floor. I encouraged the younger people who are working on gathering materials for the new Africa Archives to spend some time, seeing if there were any archivable materials that could be salvaged, while the church properties are neglected due to fights over leadership..



School entrance

campfire on Veranda

Trashed books/documents

Grass growing on roof.

Then we went to home of late Matayo Lungaho, older brother of Thomas Lungaho. Matayo was trained by early Friends to be a mason, and his many buildings were built well and still standing. His sons were excited to see us after fifty years and welcomed us warmly. His sons had built a two-story modern house, which was a pleasure to sleep in. This morning, we visited Madioli and Lihovero Friends Meetings and shared about the archives work. Madioli was mostly older people who had silence and prayer and then worshipful singing of the old familiar hymns. Lihovero was full of youth with a keyboard and oud choruses. Then we interviewed an older man who was eager to see us. He suddenly realized that I was the one called "msbeka" (their pronunciation of Miss Baker). In African tradition, children are often given names by their parents/grandparents after people important in their history. I even found a girl in Madioli named "Beka" after me!



New and old house of Matayo Lungaho



Fred interviewing William Mwita



Namesake (Beka)

I will be travelling to Tanzania USFW Conference this week. I plan to go with a Tanzanian Friend who escaped early marriage in Tanzania, and came to Kenya, graduated from FTC and married a fellow student in Kenya. That long journey can always use prayers. In gratitude,

Marian