

On the 6th, I went to Getry Agizah's to get wifi and send out messages. I got caught in a chilly rain storm, so changed clothes, wrapped myself in warm blanket, and drank hot tea to chase away the chills.

On the 7th, I did some sewing repairs under the shade of some trees. In late afternoon, a heavy rain came and blew down a tree that cut off the electricity again. Her oldest grandson came home after finishing national exams at the end of 9th grade, and he helped me pull the veins and thorns off of pumpkin leaves from the garden which we ate for supper. In our evening prayers, we often pray for those facing hurricanes, wars, hunger, and lack of shelter.

The 8th of November, I helped dig in Agneta's garden and plant cowpeas (good exercise to keep me fit). Agneta then gave me a meal of indigenous potatoes, called black potatoes (lirugu), that grow on vines in the forest. I then traveled by piki to the home of Margaret Bolenge. She helps Zelikain her ministry in Turkana and joined our team of traveling ministers this year. I discovered that she is now the clerk of Kenya Rising, which has replaced the Kakamega Care Center that Sukie Rice and Dorothy Selebwa used to run. They now work with Kenya Social Services all over western Kenya, have around 40 employees that help poor families for 3 years, teaching them ways to improve their homes, pay for the children to attend school and then move to help other families in need. It reminds me how Paul and early ministers did not spend many years in ny one village, but shared with them about the love of God and let them go ahead on their own (not create dependency on people from outside). Instead of having supporters come to Kakamega to run a summer camp for orphans, they have supporters travel out to the homes seeing how efficiently the program works. They are very strict in integrity and honest reporting. I enjoyed sharing with Margaret, her husband, and granddaughter—we had so many stories to share with each other about our experiences trying to help others.



Bukhaywa Friends Meeting.

With the Margaret Bolenges



*Margaret
Amudavi
leading the FTC
Baccalaureate
Ceremony*



Indigenous black potatoes

On Sunday, I visited Bukhaywa Friends Church, located on the top of a rocky hill. Immediately at the end of the service, it poured rain, but it was only a short, heavy rain and soon we could walk back down the hill to her home. Monday, the 11th, I travelled to FTC, Kaimosi. There I met Henry Akivoshe, the clerk of QREC Africa, and we planned various details preparing for the Africa Quaker Archives Workshop to be held the end of this month at FTC. Then had a meeting with Margaret Amudavi and Nancy Wafula, about the QW Team.

On Monday, after catching up on internet and plans for the Archives workshop, I visited Janet Mulama in Kaimosi. She has been with us to Tanzania several times, but had been seriously ill. It was a delight to find her almost healed, able to walk again, and eager to return to work as a pastor in a local church in January. In the evening, I led a zoom planning meeting for final details of the Archives workshop (see flyer attached).

The next day was Baccalaureate at FTC for their graduates. This event was far more enjoyable to witness than the official graduation, as they had top students giving speeches and receiving awards (for good service to the community in addition to academic performance). Margaret Amudavi was the Presider of the event. Out of the top students in each degree program offered, five out of the six were women! Then, various staff shared, including the librarian, receptionist, and bursar. I then traveled back to Kakamega and after errands, was driven by Abner (Agneta's son) back to Kalenda, Kabras.

I heard about the death of Ben Tsimungu, a very active Quaker pastor who could speak to a crowd of 1000 without a microphone, speaking and singing in at least three languages back and forth at once. He used props like cooking sticks, brooms, etc., to illustrate his practical messages, and no one ever fell asleep, no matter how long he preached! He also responded to William Wagoner's urging for him to go to Kisangura, Tanzania, where I have gone often.

Thursday the 13th, I rested, washed clothes, and made paper cranes and frogs with Agneta's youngest grandchild. I then received news that the annual conference of Friends Women in Tanzania had to be canceled due to unrest and insecurity in the country after the recent reelection of their president,(a woman).

Nov 14, I went to Kakamega and got materials printed for upcoming events, and checked in with various local banks about setting up an account for a travel fund for the Traveling Women ministers. That night I visited Roselyn Mutsami, a widow who is raising her grandchildren as well as studying at FTC to gain her certificate in Chaplaincy, so she can be employed in a local Friends School. She works hard, planting vegetables to feed her family, but the neighbors keep cutting her fence and stealing the vegetables when she is away at FTC.

On Saturday, I joined a busload of USFW Kenya women to travel to Kimilili for their Board Meeting. The driver did not know the way (and did not listen to those of us who knew), so got lost, delaying us. Then sped up to make up lost time and went over a large speedbump at full speed. My seat was located over the wheels, and my back got sharply jarred. Ouch! The good news received at that meeting was that FUM Africa office plans to move from Kisumu to the Handidi USFWK project), an income-generating conference center built entirely by the women here. This will save money and also locate them much closer to local Quakers. Thus, by January, there will be a safe, quiet place where all visiting Quakers can stay at a reasonable fee as well as be close to most Quakers. Margaret Bolenge was appointed as the new Historian for USFWK.

After the meeting, I was invited to Getry Agiza's home (located abutting the main highway between Kakamega and Kitale). As we walked around her new house and grounds, she took me to her relative's homes next door. They were all descendants of Robai, who had been matron at Lirhandu Girls HS, where I first taught over 50 years ago, and they were very excited to see me still alive!

On Sunday morning, I went on to Elizabeth Irungu Malenje's home in Ebwambwa, Kakamega. There I rested after meals made by Marian (one of my namesakes). Elizabeth had just returned from a visit in four countries in West Africa—Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), and Burkina Faso. Monday, I took a cold bath that relieved the back and was given some generic painkiller. Elizabeth shared her pictures, and I also shared stories about my travels in East Africa. She was most impressed with Burkina Faso, as all piki drivers were women (careful drivers) and their president is trying to all help all citizens (not just himself).

Yesterday, the 19th, I walked to the main road (taking a piki on a bumpy back road is not good for a sore back), then a matatu to Aga Khan Hospital in Kakamega. There, a skilled doctor gave me an xray to make sure there was no major damage to my spine, and then prescribed some deep freeze ointment (like ice that reduces swelling of muscles, and Zulu, a muscle relaxant. I then went to Handidi with Margaret Musalia to see Evelyn Chonge, PC of USFWK. She had many questions about the QWTEAM, (many are younger women whom she does not know). I slept solidly last night, and awoke this morning without pain. Good news! Today, i will go back into Kakamega town to get this message sent.

Thanks for all your prayers and support. You all are a blessing.
In gratitude, Marian.



Janet Mulama



USFWK's Conference Center in Handidi, near Kakamega