

Dear Fun and Fantastic Children of Trinity Lutheran Church!

It is wonderful for us to hear that you are learning about God's love for the whole world...the WHOLE world, from California to China, from Austria to Australia, from Chile to Canada, and from New York to Nairobi where we live and work as Lutheran Church missionaries to the people --and children!-- of Kenya in East Africa. If you got onto a plane in Los Angeles for a trip to where we live, you would arrive in about...do you want to guess?!...about 25 or 30 hours! We want someone to look at a clock right now...OK, do you know what time it is? We're going to guess it's about 10:30am on Sunday where you are gathered together right now; here in Nairobi, Kenya, if it is 10:30am on Sunday for you, it is 9:30 PM on Sunday where we are. You all are in church and we're getting ready to go to bed!

We love being missionaries because we love the world and all the different people who live in the world and because God loves all the people in the world, we do too. We learn so much by living amongst people who are different from us and have different cultural practices from us. Years ago, when our three children were young, we were missionaries in the country of Thailand in Southeast Asia. We wanted our children to learn about another country and also to have the experience to love people from around the world. Our children are now grown up and one of them was a Peace Corps volunteer in Zambia in southern Africa while another child traveled in India while our youngest, when we were again missionaries when she was in high school graduated from high school in Malaysia. Have any of you visited another country...or maybe have a family who comes from another country? If you have or if you have family members in another country, that's pretty cool!

An important thing we have learned is that God loves all the people of the world and God makes us all special and many of us different from one another in terms of how we speak or what we look like or how we think about our families and the food we like to eat. Isn't it great to go to a picnic and have hot dogs and hamburgers and chips and beans and cole slaw and sodas and ice cream rather than a plateful of just one of these foods? We think God, like a plate with a hot dog or hamburger and chips and coleslaw and beans and ice cream on it, loved us so much that He made us all different and unique and special, too!

OK, before we say good-bye, we want to teach you to count from one to five in the language that Kenyan children use. First in English (out loud together): one-two-three-four-five. Kenyan children say, in their Kiswahili language, moja-mbili*-tatu-nne*-tano. In other words, children here are doing the same thing you are when they count one to five but are doing it in a different way. Similarity and difference... isn't that neat?! God loves all the children and people of the world so much that God made the world a very interesting and fun place for all of us to live.

Enjoy the time you have together as we send Christian love and high fives to you all!

+Joy in God's special love for children from Kenya!

Mama Leslie and Muchungachi Mike (That's what children call us here; Mama shows respect for an adult woman while muchungachi means pastor.)