

From The Staff House Archbishop Janani Luwum Theological College, Gulu.
25.9.23

Dear Friends and supporters

I am delighted, and glad to say that we write with the sound of rain in our ears, a gentle night time rain, which is complemented by warm sun in the day time. We can almost see the food crops growing day by day, and we are grateful for God's faithful provision.

The college is, at present, host to almost 60 lay reader students. These are volunteer catechists who have been running their village churches with minimal supervision from a parish priest, and have now paid to come for three months training now, and at this time next year. At the end of this time they will be commissioned as Lay Readers and have the privilege of paying for their vestments and stoles and prayer books and continue to work on a voluntary basis. Their commitment to learning is astonishing: they have a very full timetable of lectures and also work in the field, weeding the maize which the clergy students planted, and planting some vegetables in the kitchen garden. The teaching is mostly in Acholi, or a mixture of Acholi and English. My grasp of the language is improving as I follow the morning prayer service and sing the hymns each morning.

Simon is generously giving his time to teach the students discipleship using the Rooted in Jesus materials which have now been translated into Acholi. He is also working in the diocese to understand the work of staff members, as the officers begin to think about the strategic plan for the next five years. He has also been amazing at producing policies for the college in preparation for our registration application: finance, quality assurance, safeguarding, human resources.... He has turned his hand to them all.

We heard today that next Monday the top management from Uganda Christian University (UCU) in Mukono will come and give the college a practise inspection. When we have received the feedback from that and made adjustments then I think we will be ready to put in our application to the National Council of Higher Education. So please pray for us around October 2nd, and as we complete the paperwork.

I have been making the most of not having a teaching timetable to visit neighbouring dioceses, and meet the Bishops in order to understand how the college can most effectively prepare students to be ministers in each place. The bonus of going up to Arua was a couple of hours in the best market for dress fabrics in the north of the country. I was very grateful to the American Dr Katie for transport, company and a chance to travel in comfort.

Next month we travel back to the UK to be with the family and celebrate the wedding of our son James on October 21st. Please pray that all the arrangements go smoothly. James and Chenaiyi have been working hard to arrange the wedding and the reception in York. We will be based there for most of the week, with a brief visit to Mansfield to pick up some more of the donated books and college equipment.

Looking ahead we continue to do all that is necessary for the registration of the college. Simon is raising the funds for the Rooted in Jesus conference in mid January and working with colleagues towards the Diocesan Convention which just precedes the Training event. They are expecting three to five thousand delegates at the convention. The last such event was held fifty years ago and headed by Janani Luwum. Feeding so many people in the dry season will be quite a challenge.

Many of you kindly raised funds for laptops which was extraordinarily generous. Unfortunately this money is now stuck in a Deanery account whilst the bank struggles with a change of signatories. I think that many of you will sympathise with this struggle. UK banks do seem to be struggling to service community accounts because of anxiety about money laundering. Be assured that the money is

not lost, and the laptops will be purchased and celebration photographs will be sent out to mark the moments.

Our home life is full of new life at the moment with three new kittens; and one new chick which is being mothered by two hens who were sharing the nest at egg laying time. Fortunately we don't require the wisdom of Solomon as they seem content to jointly parent the chick, and keep the rather fierce cockerel at a safe distance!

Next month we hope to be able to send photographs of the new chapel. The Korean missionaries who built the college library two years ago last week suggested that they provide manpower and funds for a purpose built chapel of the same design. We are very excited (understatement)) about this possibility, and after extensive consultation think that we have found the best site: on high ground, not too close to the library, and not where the water from driveway runs off. It will be the first building that people encounter on entering the compound. It is astonishing that a lunchtime conversation about dreams for the college can quite so quickly turn into reality. South Korea as a nation send out the most missionaries across the world. The Body of Christ is at work. We are all privileged to be called as co-workers with Jesus in his mission – through prayer, through work, through giving. Thank you for sharing with us in this work.

Love and blessings

Sarah and Simon