

JANUARY 2020

Africa Mission Trip (from Kevin and Shelly Mack)

Kevin and Shelly want to thank our church family at First Presbyterian Church Ukiah for their love, support and prayers as we embarked on a four-week trip to Zambia and Uganda. We had an amazing time and owe much of the success to all the prayers that were offered on our behalf back home. We grew to love and appreciate the dear people of Africa even more as they shared their lives and love with us on this our second trip.

Our first stop was the Kabwata orphanage in Zambia after a LONG flight. The children and staff were waiting for us and gave us a warm welcome. You never know what awaits you when you arrive. The director, Angela Miyanda immediately gave Kevin the assignment of befriending a 13-year-old young man who was rejected by his family and finally went to police station and was brought to the orphanage. He was quite angry, sad, confused and fearful. I was able to encourage him and assure him of God's love in the midst of his struggle and confusion. He appeared to make a concerted effort to connect with the other kids while we were there.

Please pray for Madalitso as he makes the transition to Kabwata. Kevin was also able to facilitate a two-day training on trauma-informed care with the aunties who provide the day to day care of the children. Most of the children have suffered severe trauma and would benefit from having an opportunity to talk and sort through some of their many thoughts and feelings. The aunties were very attentive and appreciative of the training. They are a group of incredibly dedicated, loving and strong women who do a tremendous job caring for the children.

Shelly, Kirk and Renee were tasked with helping to put together a school the orphanage had purchased about 10 minutes from Kabwata. They took an empty, bare room and created a colorful, vibrant space (actually two spaces) for the children to learn in. The school was starting in one week and they needed ideas, Kirk's building expertise and Shelly and Renee's creative touch to put it together. The school opened on time and everyone was so appreciative!

Uganda was a different experience entirely. The orphanage in Zambia is located in Lusaka which is the capital city. There is more infrastructure and stores and shops that are fairly easy to get to. In Uganda we are working in a village in Nalugazy where pastor John has his church. The roads are dirt, the transportation is questionable and you often can't believe what you see on the street. Many people travel by Boda Boda (motorcycle). It is not uncommon to see three, four even five people on board with a load of bananas, a piece of furniture or even a pig (dead or alive). We let Pastor John know that our goal was to get to know the kids in his orphanage and the people in his church rather than travel from church to church as we did two years ago. He arranged for us to visit families and widows in their homes. It was a beautiful experience to see how they lived and watch as they offered us their food, gifts and most of all their genuine love and prayers. What precious people!

We will be getting together with Pastor David to hear his experience and perspective and where we might go as a church in the future. We will then take our ideas to the mission committee for their prayer and discernment.

Please continue to pray for our dear family in Africa. If Pastor John can get a visa, he will be visiting us sometime in the future. Thank you again for all your prayers and support!

Love,
Kevin and Shelly Mack

p.s. from Shelly:

We have been back from our trip to Zambia and Uganda for a week and a half now and it is still a bit overwhelming to sort through my thoughts. Kevin did a wonderful job sharing about our experience at Kabwata Orphanage in Zambia. I would like to share more about Uganda.

Pastor John takes very seriously God's command to love and take care of widows and orphans. This commitment allowed us the humbling privilege of being welcomed into several homes of widows in the village of Nalugazi. Joy and sadness, hope and generosity, thankfulness and excitement were the most tangible feelings from both our perspective as well as our hosts. I loved every minute, even when it was uncomfortable. It was difficult to hear stories of grandmothers raising their grandchildren due to the death of the parents or more often, the parents leaving for the city for work and not returning for the children. There were many stories of sons getting loans on the family home and being unable to pay the loan. The banks are taking ownership leaving the grandmothers and children to fend for themselves. This is a tragic story we heard over and over again. Before we left each home we gave gifts of reading glasses for grandma, snacks, and a little money. They never let us leave empty handed. We were gifted beautiful handmade bowls, woven mats, bananas, mangos, hugs and kisses. What a joy!

Pastor John, Sarah and all the kids send their warm greeting and love to their church family at Ukiah First Presbyterian.





Widows Home



Pastor John's Home (the girls and boys are wearing new dresses and shorts made by the Sew Sister's from Renee and Kirk's Santa Rosa church)

1/23/2020 - Some favorite pictures from our stay at Kabwata Orphanage



During our last day at Kabwata Orphanage we polished things up in the classroom. We are all so happy with what we could do with the time we had. We are so thankful to God for allowing us to be part of this project!



Future "Eugene School"

When we arrive last Thursday (Jan 16) we discovered the orphanage was planning a school for 3-7 year olds. Renee and I were asked to help with ideas for the classrooms, which turned into a fun, *exhausting*, dirty, exciting project!!! School starts on Monday the 27th!! The photos are of what the school looked like when we arrived and some of the transformation. We have one more day here at Kabwata Orphanage. Hopefully we will be able to start decorating tomorrow.



Making divider for 3-4 yr olds and 5-7 yr olds



Finished 3-4 year olds side

We arrived at Kabwata Orphanage on January 16 to the greeting of old and new friends, kids, Aunties and Mom Angela Miyanda, who runs the orphanage. Kids and Aunties were shy at first but by the next day we were having comfortable conversations and lots of play.



Ready for Africa!

AUGUST 2019

Africa is Calling (AGAIN!)

On Monday January 13, 2020 Kevin and Shelly Mack will be leaving for Africa. We will be traveling with Kirk and Renee Afman, Shelly's sister and brother-in-law. Renee is the Chief Operating Officer with the Alkare mission organization for Africa. Our church has been supporting Alkare through the mission committee. Their mission is to provide nutrition to orphans around the world. Pastor David and Cathy Rodriguez will join us while we are in Uganda. The first leg of the trip will be Zambia for one week. We will visit the orphanage (Kabwata) we connected with two years ago. Angela Miyanda continues to run the orphanage and provide loving care for the children. One of the significant changes since we were there two years ago is the government no longer allows orphanages to provide care to children once they reach the age of 18. They are required to move out to make room for younger children. As you can imagine, this creates an enormous challenge for these adolescents who are not ready to take on the responsibilities of adulthood in a very demanding environment. Angela does a heroic job of attempting to find job placements, housing and education for these adolescents but it is a huge task with few resources. We hope to get a clearer picture of the situation and determine how we might be able to help.

Kevin also hopes to be able to visit a psychiatric hospital and meet with staff there to determine if there is a way to contribute to Zambia's budding growth in psychology. Lots of play, relationship building with the children and staff and openness to what God is doing will permeate all that happens while there.

Uganda will occupy the second half of our trip. We will meet again with Pastor John Kamulegeya and Mathias Sserugo, two leaders of the Christian community in the towns of Mityana and Jinja. Pastor John would like to organize a conference of leaders that Pastor David could speak to while in Uganda. Pastors are tremendously respected in Africa (much more so than in the U.S.). Kevin will again attempt to connect with the mental health community in Uganda to determine if he can contribute in a meaningful way. We will accompany Pastor John to the American Embassy to help with his visa to visit us in the U.S. Kevin, Kirk Afman and Pastor David may lead a series of teachings/workshops on leadership development. It could be a very busy time in Uganda.

We have learned that we may have a specific agenda when we arrive but God has very different plans. Our goal will be to remain open, available, patient, loving and kind through all of the challenges, unanticipated changes and different ways of approaching life that brings honor to God and reflects well on our church family at First Presbyterian Ukiah.

Please pray for us as we prepare that we remain healthy and ready for all that lies ahead.

Thank you so much for all the ways you contribute to this trip. This is YOUR mission trip as much as the Mack's and Rodriguez's. You go with us in spirit and in love.

In Christ,
Kevin, Shelly, David and Cathy



The finished orphanage in Mityana, Uganda



Some of Pastor John and Sarah's children and the orphans they care for.



Children from Kabwata Orphanage in Zambia

NOVEMBER 2018

Project is NOW COMPLETED!!! What's Next?!

Pastor John, his family and the orphans extend their deep gratitude and thanks to our congregation and community for all the support they received during this building project. We helped make their dreams come true; thanks be to God! They are moved in and a water tank was installed as well. Because we have fully funded this project any further donations that come in will go into our General Mission fund and for our **future mission trip** to Uganda in **January, 2020!** *Please consider joining us for this next important chapter!*

FEBRUARY 2018

Africa is Calling!!

We (Shelly and Kevin) returned from our whirlwind trip to Africa on Tuesday, January 30. We couldn't have done it without our family at First Presbyterian. There were times we literally felt carried by your prayers. Your generous support was not only appreciated by us, but everyone we met and worked with in Africa thanks you.

We began our trip as the traveling rookies we are. The luggage didn't come in at the proper weight and they ended up taking my (Kevin's) carry-on as a check-on. The result was no underwear when we arrived in Amsterdam for a 10 hour lay-over. I purchased three pair of underwear at the airport for \$42. I was roundly teased until the luggage didn't make it to our destination in Uganda and everyone borrowed my nice Calvin Kline's (money well spent). We finally arrived in Zambia after 36 hours of travel. We stayed at the orphanage at Kabwata. The children were so loving, kind and joyous that we immediately knew they were ministering to us, not us to them. We were able to make significant relationships and provide love and support to these dear children as well as staff. Zambia appears to be relatively flat and dry. We were able to go on a day long safari and experienced the beauty and wonder of the country. The orphanage was located in Lusaka which is the capital of Zambia which lends an international flavor when you travel the city. The most meaningful experience for me was a friendship I made with Patrick, a ten year-old boy who lost his mother two months ago after his father shot and killed her. The father asked Patrick to get the gun and give it to him. Needless to say, Patrick is suffering from guilt, shame and confusion. I was able to pray with him and give him a little insight into what it might take for him to recover from this tragedy. I will keep in touch with this amazing young man. He has two younger sisters with him at the orphanage who are equally amazing.

Uganda was a very different experience. Tropical, green and lush when you leave the city. Lots of pineapple, mango, avocado and jack fruit. You've never had jack fruit?? It is a large(25 lbs) prickly hanging fruit that is extremely sticky (you need oil to clean your hands). Once you crack it open you indulge on pods of deliciousness. We stayed in Jinga for three days on the Nile river. It was surreal to actually put our feet in the Nile river. Gorgeous area. We spent most of our time with Pastor John Kamulegeya. He mentors numerous pastors in addition to overseeing his church in Nalugazi. We have identified a project for our church to

help Pastor John construct the rest of his orphanage. He is currently living in a small home with his wife, five biological children and 15 orphans. His wife is pregnant with their sixth. He has been constructing his home for four years and needs our help to finish the project. The mission committee agrees that this is a good project for us and more will be revealed regarding fund raisers. The project will require approximately \$8,000.00 to complete. He is a gentle, wise, loving man with integrity and a history of providing good accountability with projects the Alkare Foundation <http://www.alkare.org/> has helped him with (school, well and nutrition). We may have the opportunity to return and continue this beautiful relationship. *Please be in prayer about what our future with Pastor John and this area of Africa might entail.*

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your generosity, prayer and love. God is working in this wondrous continent and I suspect He is changing us in the process.

With much love and thanks,



Kevin and Shelly Mack