



“If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountain and go in search of the one that is lost? ... so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little one be lost.” Matt.18: 12,14

RETURNING TO THE FIELD - TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH IS LOST!



Bob and I arrived in Kenya Jan. 24th, in pretty good shape considering the long trip. We're really grateful for everyone that made this possible, and are so excited to be back in our "2nd home"! We are soon to be joined by Lillian Armstrong, and on Feb 12th by Ben and Courtney Farrington, who met on the Kenya trip in 2023, returned home and became married! Sue Choquette will not be joining us this time, as she was recently diagnosed with a health issue that needs attention; please pray for her. We miss her presence and insight dearly, however, we plan to be in regular touch with her via email and zoom calls with the team.

We met the precious new preschoolers, and are reminded again, "It's all about the kids!" In order to see the families and community they live in transformed, we plan to visit the homes of our students in the slums, "seeking undiscovered jewels", and work toward improving our current programs with them in mind. Please pray for this small team to have big impact; for health, energy, wisdom, sensitivity to the Lord and to one another, and for many to find Christ, and to better understand His Word, His love, and His ways.

LOOKING BACK AT 2024: GOD HAS INDEED EXPANDED OUR TERRITORY!

1. Land: AC purchased five adjacent plots, doubling the previous land area! This creates badly needed space for a playground, a 2nd set of toilets, gardens, cows and chickens, and our own Primary School!
2. We finally have a well! This is already supplying the compound and the community with plenty of clean water!
3. We installed solar power for the well, and are now installing more panels to serve the entire compound, greatly reducing utility costs.
4. We increased security with the addition of a 3rd watchman, security lights and guard dogs, and upgraded the fencing. Safety is a priority.

The increase was not only in construction and development, but also in the quality and breadth of programs and ministry:

Accounting and Finances: We are pleased to report that in 2024, the percentage of AC donations going to ministry on the field was 89.1%. 😊

Wyckliffe Majani, who has served with us as social worker and Business instructor for 14 years, is now our full-time accountant in Kenya. He has been trained in Quickbooks, which is now coming into use. This will greatly enhance the team's ability to keep records and to track the programs.

Connect Premiere Preschool and Connect Premiere Primary:

The preschool continues to improve in beauty and in performance, giving the poorest children an opportunity to grow and learn in a healthy, loving environment. 65 children were fed two meals daily, and received uniforms, medical care and excellent educational instruction. We are now welcoming the new 2025 Playgroup, the first of



three grades. This summer the preschoolers earned #1 position in the Regional Music and Dance competition, and #3 in the District, out of hundreds of schools! The Primary students came in #3 and #5 in the same.

In 2024, the temporary primary building was expanded to Grade 4, and in December, Grade 5 was added! Our development priority for 2025, mandated by the Ministry of Education, will be construction of a new Primary-Jr Secondary School, accommodating Grades 1-9. It will be 2 stories to save space, and include a computer and science lab, art and music classes, and Home Services. We will have an estimate for that coming soon.

Ian Memorial Sponsorship Program:

ATTENTION: WE HAVE A GREAT NEED FOR SPONSORS!!!! 3 children have lost their sponsors and need a new one, 3 high school boarding students need a 2nd sponsor, and only 3 of our preschool graduates have been sponsored to go to Grade 1. Our target was 10, meaning we need **12** new sponsors! Please pray with us about this need, these children really need to stay in school! (Please contact ianmemorial@gmail.com for information).

In the IMS program in 2024, there were 65 children in grades 1-8, covered by 40 sponsors. Included in that number is Joel, enrolled in a school for the deaf. We sponsored 30 in Secondary, three of whom qualified to attend National Schools due to their high marks. Due to a sharp drop in the exchange rate and drastic price increases, the IMS Fund suffered a deficit for 2024; gifts to the Ian Memorial General Fund were extremely helpful, and continue to be, to help cover unusual or unexpected costs beyond basic sponsorship. Thank you!

Continuing Education: Susan is in her final year of training to be an electrician, and 2 students, Joseph and Nevin, are studying at Kenyan universities, and Nevin will be graduating this year. Other students have graduated as airline stewards, plumbers, and one did an internship in food service and is now working to support herself.

Empowerment and Discipleship Programs:

The Empowerment programs grew in 2024 in numbers and commitment. We are encouraged with signs that the Connect parent community is recognizing what a wonderful opportunity God has presented to them, and the personal rewards of becoming a productive citizen. Pastor Apollo and team are enforcing a strong policy to require all parents to be involved in church and to join an empowerment program; in each program, they also attend one discipleship class per week. Apollo is now stressing the need for the instructors to find ways to make their program self-supporting by the end of 2025.

Tailoring: Two classes grew to 18 students total; the instructors reported increased focus and performance in the students. The 2024 tailoring graduates are now making our student uniforms; one will be gifted her own machine and table. Of last year's 2 ladies that received the same, one is working in our Tailoring Production unit, and the other started her own business, which has been very successful. The Production unit made curtains and uniforms for the preschool and primary classes, and is making and selling clothes to local customers. They were unable to get contracts from local schools this year because they don't have a required embroidery machine, pressing machine and materials and supplies. (Total need: \$2000)



Business Boost: In 2024 the business group continued to grow, receiving and paying back two more loans of increasing amounts. One student wrote, "We as Canani Women's group would like to take this opportunity to appreciate you and the entire team for your financial support and education in the Business Empowerment Program... as women we have been able to empower our lives and [become independent]....our families can depend on us...we feel like great people in the society." We are looking forward to more groups forming!

Hairdressing: 6 graduated in our first class, and were very enthusiastic; they received tools to help their business.

Computer: Africa Connect has purchased several desktop computers, and we now have a computer lab! All the high school students, as well as staff and teachers, were trained during the school holidays. Teachers are now required to teach computer to primary levels; later this year we will be purchasing tablets for the students. They are currently working in a small office; in the future, they envision having an IT center that can support itself.

Outreach & Relief: Connect Chapel's theme for 2025, "Expanding our Territory", speaks to reaching the lost and increasing influence in the community. Church members are being mentored in leadership, forming a strong and diverse team. A church offering solid Bible teaching in an atmosphere of compassion and integrity is difficult

to find here; as a result, the church is full, and they are currently looking at how they can expand the building. Services are streamed live on YouTube: <https://youtube.com/@connectchapelkitala?si=3whXXJyMDCyuhD>.

Relief: Two food distributions were undertaken in April and December to assist families during the holidays, a particularly difficult time when the children do not have meals at school. Thank you for helping to fund those.

Medical: In 2024 Sue established the Chronic Medical Care Follow-up Program, targeting our chronically ill parents/guardians who may not have the resources for medication (and food to go with it!) Dr. Urbanus Ekombe works with the school social workers to identify those in need, and sees them regularly. In February the AC team and the church conducted a blood pressure clinic to help identify issues, and a 2nd community clinic which served 125 local people who struggle to get medical care, sharing the Gospel and health instruction with them as well. Mosquito nets were purchased and families trained in their use. Dr. Ekombe has also begun regular checkups on our students, saving money and trips to the clinic! We have a need for a sponsor for medical needs: \$200/mo.

Radio: Pastor Apollo Juma continues to minister to an estimated 3 million in Kenya and Uganda via two weekly radio shows. At the end of 2024, Imani Radio invited the Connect team to minister overnight with prayer, worship and teaching; it had a tremendous impact. Besides serving as pastor of Connect Chapel and giving spiritual oversight to Connect programs, Apollo still works full time as a public primary school administrator.

Farming and Husbandry:

A major development in 2024 was entering into partnership with Crown Ministries and Foundations for Farming. Apollo and Emmanuel, a church member, traveled to Rwanda for training in this globally recognized farming program targeting rural Africans. As William manages the farm to grow food for the school, Emmanuel has created demonstration plots on our new land, and will lead parent instruction in Biointensive organic agriculture. Following this phase of the program will be training in business and money management.

A zero-graze cow shed is being built on the new land to protect 2 new dairy cows! We are adding an additional 200 chickens so the children can have more eggs, and some can be sold to support the program.

We plan to start bee-keeping on the farm land, and instruct the parents in that endeavor. Needed: \$225

Special Events in 2024:



Graduation: With a desire to create a positive and celebratory environment for the children and their families, this year's graduation in November was truly an event. Dignitaries spoke, laying colorful wreaths on the preschoolers in their graduation gowns. They all formed a parade through the neighborhood into town, complete with marching



band, with the tailoring grads bearing a banner and parents dancing ahead of the parade. How much fun is that!

Connect Family Celebration: In early December, Apollo shared that the church was holding an event to celebrate the families, and they had raised funds and cooked food for 400 people! Surprisingly, 700 showed up and were joyfully welcomed; and, of course, there was enough to feed them all, with some left over for the poor widows!

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, PRAYER AND SUPPORT NEEDS:

- ❖ Pastor Apollo is planning to launch a Bible school in early 2025! This has been a desire of ours for a long time.
- ❖ Connect now offers Literacy as an Empowerment program, to assist parents to better operate in society.
- ❖ We finally have space for a playground for the children!!! The cost for playground equipment: \$2700
- ❖ We need funding for 5 more computers for the computer lab, total need \$2335.
- ❖ We need to add 200 chickens, and move the chicken coop and dog kennel to the new land; \$2000
- ❖ Upcoming: A workshop to teach the men carpentry, welding and tin smithing, and perhaps plumbing!

Thank you again for your faithful prayers and financial support that make it all happen, by the grace of God! We will be reporting more shortly from the ground here in Kenya. Also, see our updates on Facebook.

LuAnn Herring, for the AC team US and Kenya

Please contact us at info.africaconnect@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to join our mailing list.

Mailing Address: Africa Connect, PO Box 598, Lee, MA 01238. The Africa Connect website (with Paypal) is www.africaconnect.org. You can follow us on Facebook at <https://web.facebook.com/africaconnect.us>.