



***“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23).***

Dear friends and family,

As I contemplated what to share by way of an update in this difficult season we are in, God’s faithfulness was what stood out the most to me. Yes, there have been challenges, but God has been so faithful. It is also His past faithfulness that gives us hope for the future.

God has been faithful to our third-year RICE students in letting them complete their final classes before school closed. In March, just as the government was closing schools and churches due to COVID-19, we had seven RICE students finish their three years of study in the teacher training program. They completed their student teaching during their last term and held a book fair for fourth through sixth graders during the last week of school. I was so thankful that their exams did not have to be postponed and that they could finish after all their hard work. They will take part in our accrediting university’s graduation ceremony later to receive their Associates Degree in Preprimary and Elementary Education. The academic and spiritual growth of these students is also cause for joy and I trust God will finish what He started in them (Philippians 1:6).



The book fair



Windell teaching P.E. during practicum

God has been faithful to our resident children. Closures aligned with our three week break from school. Most of our residents were scheduled to go out on home visits with their relatives during the school break. We decided to cancel those visits due to the health risks and burden to relatives if we could not bring students back due to the virus. At the time, it was hard to make the decision because we did not know how long closures would last. Since then, Liberia has come under a stay-at-home order which would have made it difficult for us to

receive the children back, so we are thankful for the Lord's leading in that decision.



Rafiki residents playing on our new sports court

God has been faithful to our students: residents and day students. After the school break ended, the stay-at-home order was still in effect. We were able to start school for our residents, but since national teachers were not allowed to come, we had to come up with an alternate plan. We called upon our older residents (eighth through tenth graders) to help teach our youngest kids, while Julie and I taught the older ones. For this phase, we taught only language arts and math.



Moses and Michael teaching sixth grade language arts

Since that time, the government has allowed teachers to come to their work sites and submit lessons for their students, in an effort to make sure that all school children could continue learning from home. Most people cannot afford internet, so we are preparing paper lessons and packets. With teachers preparing lessons, now we are able to provide material in all the subjects. Parents of day students come and pick up their lessons every

two weeks, and drop off the completed work to be graded. During this phase, we still have our older kids helping our residents to explain and teach the lessons to the younger ones. They too are seeing God's faithfulness in equipping them to lead and teach others.



Julie getting ready to hand out student packets



Julie's assistant, Julius, preparing to help in the distribution process



School packet for a day student

God has been faithful in getting His Word out. We have been able to continue the Rafiki Mothers' Bible Study and staff Bible Study with social distancing. In addition, the Rafiki Bible Study Home Devotion Page is being used in our cottage devotions and is being sent out to day students in their school packets. The true hope during this storm is being communicated to teach about our faithful God.

Finally, God has been faithful to me. I just completed my last on-line class toward my degree and the next step will be student teaching in the fall, Lord willing. It has been a challenging two and a half years, with busyness and roadblocks. In every situation, God has opened doors and helped me on. Even with this last class, I was able to obtain digital field experience to finish the class, instead of it being postponed. Additionally, I can testify to your faithful support of me through prayer and financial giving for nearly ten years. A missionary once told me, "God never leaves you on the street corner alone" and I can attest that this is true.

Faithfulness like this gives me hope for the future. He is loving, merciful, and oh so faithful!

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christie". The letters are cursive and connected, with a small dot above the 'i'.

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