

Greetings to my sponsoring churches! When I wrote to you last month, I was on my way to Pennsylvania and New York. In both places, I had the chance to connect with some old friends in person or by phone, and meet some people who might like to work with the new Lutheran Health Care Program. We will be looking for health care people who might be interested in volunteering!

I preached at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church in Turbotville, PA and after the worship service, I did a presentation on my work in Liberia and India and they fed me well. From there, I took the train to New York City and stayed with the pastor/chaplain of The Wartburg and United Lutheran Church, Mt. Vernon, NY and her husband who is an ELCA pastor in Manhattan. In Mt. Vernon, I got a chance to spend time with the members of United Lutheran and did a presentation for the staff involved with palliative care at The Wartburg.

After that, I went to New Jersey where I stayed with a good friend from seminary who has a church there. Near Princeton, NJ, I found an Indian restaurant – Saravana Bhavan – part of the same chain as one of my favorite places in Vellore - I just had to eat there. The food was excellent, but not quite as good as the one in India, and the price was about 500% more! We visited another Indian restaurant while I was there and I got heartburn! My theory is that it has something to do with the preservatives in the spices and other ingredients. After packing and repacking, I was ready for the next leg of my journey – Liberia. I was only there for two weeks. I got to be at the graduation ceremony for the Masters in Nursing Education program I was part of founding. There were 15 students in that program and more than 500 more from Associate and Bachelor programs in nursing. A three and a half hour program, but lots of new nurses and that is good news for the state of medicine in Liberia.

The rest of my time in Liberia was spent having meetings with various officials, and I spent some time at both of the Lutheran hospitals – Phebe and Curran. The roads were really bad and that made the going very slow and bumpy. I found that I had really gotten used to having electricity 24/7 and missed it a lot. I did enjoy preaching at St.

Luke's Lutheran – the church I attended and often preached at while I was living there. And I was able to get things in motion for a neonatologist from India to come and visit and conduct some training for staff at both hospitals in caring for premature babies and babies who contract tetanus. Both are much too common and a major cause of infant mortality.

I went to Curran Hospital with two techs from Phebe to help get the dental equipment installed there. My regular driver was laid up with a bout of malaria, the road to Curran was not good but doable for our four-wheel drive vehicle, and the trip took three and a half hours. They weren't able to complete the installation – which was a disappointment.

I was coming down with my first cold in a year and didn't feel well myself. All in all, a frustrating trip!

I had a few meetings in Monrovia and then it was time to pack up again.

It looked like I was traveling for a year. Oh right – I have been, I am, and I will be! I flew to Nairobi, Kenya after paying \$150 in excess luggage fees, but on the plus side, I got a whole row to myself on the flight which was very nice. My luggage almost went to India – perhaps out of habit – but the error was caught in time. From Nairobi, I took a shuttle to Arusha, Tanzania which will be my new base of operations. I will be here in Arusha for about three weeks right now, meeting people and getting the lay of the land. Then I am off for preparation and rejuvenation time in Hawaii.

As I travel and try to prepare for my new job, I especially need your prayers. And know that you are always in mine. Peace, John