

2018 Endowment Grant & Blessings from previous Endowments & Gifts

Dear Friends,

Hello! I am happy to be writing to you once again with a special letter. This is my #100 letter to our FLC Congregation and friends of the mission! Thank you! If you have missed any of my previous letters you can catch up online. Brian Wentzel has been so kind and generous as to keep an archive of all my letters. Go to www.firstlutheranlorain.org, click on Outreach, scroll down to Ghana Mission, and then scroll to the left, to Ghana Archive. I'd also like to welcome Bethesda On the Bay Lutheran Church as they begin to read these articles and learn about our mission.

This letter is about the wonderful results of grants from FLC's Endowment Fund and other important financial gifts. This support over the years, has made awesome contributions towards the development and growth of Akrampa. These are gifts above and beyond your normal monthly support. Most of these have gone toward repairs that the school has needed, without which the school building and its infrastructure would be in serious dilapidation, if not in total collapse.

Before I tell you how the 2018 Endowment Grant has touched the lives of the children, I want to remind you of the positive impact of past gifts. Please, as you take your time to read this, thank God for His blessings on our mission!

Special gift money was sent early in the building of the mission school to make the addition of three more classrooms. The first three classrooms were built in the mid-1990's with savings that I was making from the monthly transfers took quite awhile. It was literally what I would describe as 'adding brick to brick'. When the first block of three classrooms had been built for Grades 1-3, the church sent special funds to build the second block of another three classrooms for Grades 4-6. At that time we thought our Primary School was complete. But the Lord would provide more!

Another special set of funds and money raised by you, was given to Akrampa to dig, build and install a kilometer and a half long pipe carrying clean water to the village. This helped to greatly improve the health and outlook of the population in the village and its community. Apart from the school, clean water coming into the village was the single most significant contribution to their well-being.

In 2008, finances were sent ahead of the arrival of the 'Group of Eight', led by Pastor Woody, that helped with plastering of the school and some fence building. Some of them actually tried their hands at helping our local workers with the plastering. It was different than what they were used to, but we had a wonderful time. Gifts were also given for the re-roofing of the Grades 1-3 classrooms. Originally cheap roofing material was used because I was trying to be as budget conscious as possible. But it was causing great discomfort whenever it rained. Rain water just 'poured' in, soaking the children and damaging school materials. The repairs brought great relief and joy.

The First Lutheran Endowment Committee has been very generous to our Ghana Mission. The following are projects that have been done with the yearly Endowment Grant. Thank you!

*2011 - Plastering the inside walls and concrete on the floors of the Grade 1-3 classrooms

*2012 - Re-roofing for the rest of the school that had not been previously completed

*2013 & 2014 - New and used computers bought for the school to be used in the classrooms

*2014 - New school uniforms for 55 of the students

*2015 - We built a new Kindergarten classroom because the need was so great! And now our mission school has Grades K-6th!

*2016 & 2017 - My old Jeep was no longer a functional vehicle. The Ghana Committee began a fundraiser for a new vehicle for me and the congregation gave so generously! The Endowment Fund gave money toward the new vehicle, and Church Council approved a loan to the Ghana Committee.

*2017 - I purchased a new vehicle in Ghana with this money. This vehicle is used for all mission work and is also my family vehicle.

It is time to tell you the good news/bittersweet news about the 2018 Endowment Fund Grant. This year The Ghana Committee asked for money to cover two purposes. First were repairs for the school and second was money to help my amazing assistant and helper, Mercy. She is desperately in need of surgery on her right hip and cannot afford it. (see my May 2018 article in the archive) The Endowment Fund gave for Mercy, and also some of the congregation has donated. Sadly, even with these gifts, we still do not have enough for her to get the surgery. Mercy is limping around in pain, doing her best to complete her work each day to help the children and the school. If you would like to help contribute to Mercy, please clearly mark your gifts "Mercy's Surgery -Ghana."

Over the years I have carefully kept up repairs on the school as much as possible with the monthly transfer. But some wear and tear on the school has exceeded what the normal monthly budget can fix. If you own a home, you know how some repairs can be done regularly and some need a lot more money. The 2018 Endowment Fund gave us \$1,500 to make a vast amount of repairs and build new items for the classrooms. We need close to \$4,000 to fully make all of the repairs, but we are so grateful to begin this process now! Remember in Ghana, almost everything is built by hand, by carpenters and craftsmen.

With our 2018 Endowment, the mission school got the following items:

- 10 windows were replaced - out of 24 total that are needed
- 1 door was replaced - out of 12 total needed
- 8 cupboards for storing textbooks and other teaching materials were built - out of 9 total needed
- 3 teachers' tables were built - out of 6 total needed
- 2 Kindergarten classroom tables were built - out of 4 total needed
- 20 Kindergarten classroom chairs were built (10 for each table) - out of 40 total needed

We are so grateful that these items covered by the grant could be made. It has brought such joy to the Kindergarten children, especially since some who didn't have chairs to sit on now have their own and tables to work on.

The tables are big and round. They used to be designed in the shape of a hexagon, but the children's department now thinks that if they are round we can fit more students at each table. We built 10 small chairs for each table. Since the school started, this is the first time we are making cupboards for storing teaching and learning materials. In each classroom up to this time the most valuable items are sent into the small head teacher's office for safekeeping after school each day then collected for use each morning. The new cupboards will be kept under lock and key.

The 12 remaining damaged doors allow people to get in after school and do all kinds of unhelpful things when school is closed. These can often be people from other villages or wandering people without homes. Almost every day, before classes can begin, the classrooms must be cleared and cleaned of all kinds of unspeakable things left behind by those who abuse the rooms during the night. Some people make the classrooms their sleeping place, and with no locks and security, there is nothing to prevent easy access. We decided that the head teacher's office needed to be secured first so we got that door fixed with what we had. As I already indicated, it is in the office that valuable teaching items and materials are kept, including the computers that the church donated in 2013 & 2014.

It is our fervent prayer that the remaining items would be repaired and replaced soon, especially the doors, so the school, particularly the classrooms, would be secured. If this project touches your heart and you would like to help, please clearly mark your gift "Classroom Repairs - Ghana."

We graciously thank the Endowment Committee for their gift. And we are so thankful for the amount of work that we were able to accomplish at this time.

Blessings, Pastor Ben