

Happy Lydia, Dorcas, & Phoebe witnesses to the faith commemoration!



27 January 2024

So, I missed a Christmas letter and an Epiphany letter, so here is a lesser festival in the Lutheran church year to honor: **Happy Lydia, Dorcas, and Phoebe witnesses to the faith commemoration!**

Greetings from Tanzania, where I am engaging a postdoctoral Marie Curie fellowship funded by the EU. Wartburg Seminary generously provided a 3-year leave of absence, holding my position for me. If you want to read more about the fellowship, [click this link](#).

Anya is in her final semester of a master's degree in mathematics at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden. She is holding down the fort, staying in my condo in Uppsala.

**Anya and me at Christmastime
in our Marie Curie T-shirt gifts
from sister-in-law/aunt Barbara.**

So, I've become what I call an **“accidental pilgrim.”**

A pilgrimage is an ancient spiritual practice “in which travel to sacred sites leads to the transformation of the soul.”¹ While life for me is always a journey following Jesus, I didn't realize it would be such a multi-country and circuitous pilgrimage!

After leaving Sweden in the summer of 2022 for a year of teaching at **Wartburg Seminary** in the USA, I am now in Tanzania for two years. I'm living on the campus of Tumaini University Makumira, a branch of the Lutheran university. The final year of the fellowship will be in Norway (2025–2026). Summers will be spent with Anya in Sweden.

If you want to follow me on my accidental pilgrimage, you can check out my blog. When I started it in 2015—when Anya and I were in Norway for my PhD—in order to keep grandparents tracking Anya's adventures, I never knew that the title of the blog would be so apropos **“Whither so ever thou goest...”** from Joshua 1:9 (KJV).

¹ Christian George (2006) *Sacred Travels: Recovering the Ancient Practice of Pilgrimage*

The World Heritage site of Birka, the first city in Sweden, where St. Ansgar and the first church (AD 831) is honored.



A blue monkey comes to my window to greet me in my house on the campus of Tumaini University Makumira.

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