

Go Tell It on the Mountain

January 2016 Newsletter

Skyland Community Church

Rev. Stephen Glauz-Todrank

10:30 Sunday Service

Church phone: 408-353-1310

Mission Board Supports Kids in 3 Countries



Carolina McCall with Guatemala
Painting School Kids

Through the Mission Board, Skyland Church supports international students through funds for tuition and room-and-board. We do so in three locations: Guatemala, India, and Fiji.

In the highlands of Guatemala, twelve-year-old Hilicias struggles his way through school. Skyland Church pays his tuition to Help me Paint my Future, an innovative program that mentors Hilicias in an art program, tutors him in schoolwork, and gives his family weekly food.

In Fiji, Skyland Church's donation supports three students. One of them is Sailosi, whom we have supported throughout her high-school career. To attend school, she travels to a neighboring island.

In India, we pay partial tuition for Suresh, who is in his third year of electrical and electronics courses at a polytechnic institute. His parents are day laborers on a farm and earn \$4 a day; because of drought, they find work for only three months of the year. We also support Vetriselvan, who is in his third year and whose brothers and parents are day laborers.

All of this support has resulted from

Minister's Column

Gospel of John as New Year Guide

Dear Skyland Friends,

Happy New Year!

I look forward to our new year together; and I plan to structure my sermons for the next few months on the Gospel of John, particularly on the shift of consciousness Jesus is offering to all who hear and believe him.

During Advent and Christmas, we have told and acted out the story of how God enters human life in order to use us to change the world with love.

In the new year, I will be continuing that theme, using the bold and revolutionary teachings of Jesus found in the Fourth Gospel. I hope you will spend some time reading it, and will contact me with your thoughts and questions so that we can puzzle upon them together.

I am convinced that great treasures await us, so I look forward to adventuring with you. Grab your Bible and bring it along as we open to God's Word and how it will speak to us.

Blessings in the new year and always.

-- Stephen

###

Cold New Years Plunge Aids HIV+ Baobab Children

Anne Evans reports:

Ken Russo, a board member at the Baobab home in Tanzania, sends this report on some of the HIV-positive children at the home who have benefited from the HIV books Skyland sent them last fall. Ken himself has been HIV+ for more than 25 years and last spring contributed \$300 to Skyland's African Library Project. The plunge he refers to is apparently an annual event to raise money for the home.

personal connections with members of Skyland Church, who have visited the schools and know the students.

Come join us on Sunday, January 17th, for a potluck that celebrates Skyland's students. We hope to hear updates on their progress. There will also be a special collection that day.

-- John Heyes

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Genevieve's Grateful for Help



Genevieve Sharp

Genevieve Sharp, the 8-year-old Skyland gymnast, wants members to know how grateful she is for the financial support they provided in response to her appeal Jan. 27.

Genevieve is in level 3 gymnastics at West Valley Gymnastics School in Campbell. The money Skyland gave went to the school's Booster Club, to help the school compete at gymnastics meets.

"Thank you all for your support," say Genevieve and her mother, Dorice Peraino-Sharp. "It means a lot to us."

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Altar Flowers

To donate altar flowers in January, please sign up on the calendar in Whitaker Hall.

As this year winds down, we are approaching my least favorite day of the year, New Year's Day. Around 3:30 p.m. that day, I will throw myself into frigid Cape Cod Bay for the HIV+ kids of Baobab Home in Bagamoyo, Tanzania (www.tzkids.org).

Personally, I prefer my bath water body temperature at the least. My consolation is that the plunge is only about 10 seconds of sheer hell. The main consolation, of course, is the children of Baobab it supports, Stronger Together.

These are 25 young people aged 8-17, all of whom were born with the HIV virus. Even though these children have received free medication, the last two times I have visited them in Bagamoyo, a young boy has died.

Please find it in your hearts to help these kids. Checks can be made out to Baobab Home and sent to me:

Ken Russo
11 Willow Drive
Provincetown, MA 02657

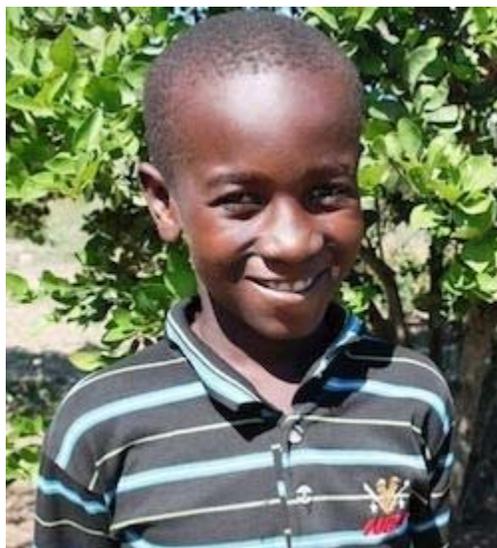
Note: Baobab school supports 10 orphans with a breakfast program plus all the workings of a fully operational, 15-acre farm, along with farm workers.

This farm supplies almost all the school needs with fruits, vegetables, eggs and milk. The farm runs on solar power and biogas and is completely off the grid.

There are 86 fully sponsored students in Baobab's government acclaimed school, the Steven Tito Academy (www.steventitoacademy.org). Baobab Home is registered in the US (and Tanzania) as a 501(c)3 charity and all donations are tax deductible.

Some of the children:

Jahaya is 10 years old and in the second grade. He lives with his mother and sister Kurusumu, who is also in the group. His father ran away when his family was diagnosed, because he couldn't handle the shame. No one in the family told Jahaya about his HIV status; he found out from the hospital.



One day he asked his mom "Why do I have HIV? is it because you do? Why don't you tell me about yourself? People told me that's how it is, that a mother has it first".

He said "I love you mom." The family hides their status from everyone.

Jahaya is openly eager for knowledge and understanding



winter rains revive
jaded plants, kindle gold on
African daisies.

-- haiku by John Heyes

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Spaghetti !



Once again, the Woman's Group will sponsor the annual spaghetti dinner, this time with puttanesca and meat sauces and the usual garlic bread, dessert and drinks, on **Friday, Jan. 22** from 6 to 8 p.m. at Whitaker Hall. Cost is \$10/person, \$20/family. Bring wine to share. Music and other entertainment as well.

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Christmas Eve Music



Margretta shows the way

about HIV and the group is helping him uncover the truth as he is able to handle it. Jahaya is very funny and loves swimming and drawing.

Ashura is very shy. She loves to draw and play the drums, but she is afraid to swim.

She is 10 and lives with her mom. They are very poor and her mother has trouble getting her nourishing food. When her mother finally had the courage to tell her about HIV, Ashura had already figured it out and had been living with the knowledge herself.



Her mother says that Ashura likes the group very much; when she knows she is going there she wakes up happy. She is generally much happier since she started with the group.

Saidi is ten years old and lives with both of his parents. A quiet boy who is good in school, he is in the fourth grade. Last year he asked why he has to take medicine every day and he was told about his HIV. He was in shock but has come to accept it well.



He attends the monthly HIV clinic at the local hospital by himself most of the time, or goes with his grandmother who is also HIV+. His grandfather died of AIDS but Saidi doesn't know that yet.

Unlike some of the other kids, Saidi has heard HIV spoken about openly in his house and he has faced no extreme stigma yet. He is the group's treasurer. All group property such as mats, cups, and balls, reside at his house and he makes sure they all get

well taken care of.

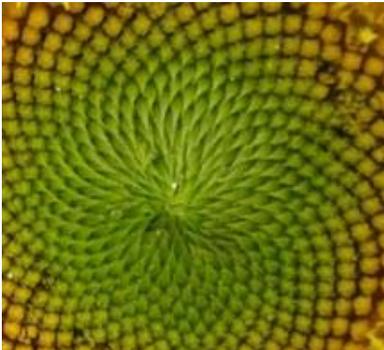


Gerry and Paula

-- Photos by Ellie Lavender

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Meditation Moment



To See a World in a Grain of Sand
 And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
 Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
 And Eternity in an hour

-- William Blake,
Auguries of Innocence

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In Memoriam

This is Samson, who died of AIDS in September 2014, at the age of 16. When this photo was taken, he was 14 and had just finished 7th grade. He lived in a mud hut with his mother and sisters. His mother and stepfather drank a lot, so Samson had to do a lot on his own. He liked the company of his grandfather.



Samson loved to act in plays and skits and was quite talented. He experienced horrible stigma in his short life. He was spat on by people for being HIV+ and treated cruelly by adults and children in his neighborhood. He managed to forgive those people.

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NOTE from your treasurer:

December 2015 financial report.

Giving Tree project update: a total of \$2,250 was dispensed to help several of our neighborhood families with food and gifts this season. Thanks to all for your generosity.

Blanket giving totaled \$1,793.62. Check has been mailed to Church World Service to support their special Blanket outreach project. Thanks again for your generous giving.

We are now able to accept credit card payments for pledges and offerings, if that is more convenient than check or cash. See either Jan or myself after service for these transactions.

Our financial picture is still looking healthy,.

Here are our operating finances for December 2015 as of Dec. 28:

	Summary of Operating Finances			
	Dec 2015		Jun 1, 2015 to Dec 31	
	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned
Income	\$ 33,861	\$ 32,865	\$122,405	\$119,130
Expenses	\$ 23,989	\$ 24,950	\$112,109	\$114,500
Net	\$ 9,872	\$ 7,915	\$ 10,296	\$ 4,630

-- Gerald J. Alonzo, Treasurer