

Rollicking in Rwanda

Stephanie Engel's YAGM Year

It's a Monkey's Wedding

Learn Kinyarwanda

Muraho Hello

Murabeho Goodbye

Amakuru? What's the news?
(used as how are you?)

Yego Yes

Oya No

Inkoko Chicken

Moto Motorcycle

Ndashaka ikawa
I want coffee

Simfite inka, ariko mfite imbwa.

I do not have cows, but I have dogs.

Niya isoko kugura inanasi.
I am going to the market to buy pineapple.

It's a monkey's wedding day! I learned this phrase as the rainy season is upon us. This phrase is used to describe a day when there is rain but the sun still shines. The ability of the sun to shine in even the worst storm is how these two months in Rwanda have been. No matter how homesick I get or how many events I miss; I am truly thankful and joyful that I am here.

I have been greeted into such a loving community here in Kibungo. I really enjoy living near schools and never having to walk alone as students accompany me almost everywhere I go. 'Teacher' is not something I thought I would be called and now I search for my students when I hear the word called across the street.

There are many names I am now known by, evidence of the relationships I am forming. It is a special bond that allows for pet names, a claim to some-



My host dad and I at the border of Rwanda and Tanzania

one. It is heartwarming to hear people take ownership of me, that I am no longer a visitor in their eyes but a part of the community.

It also feels really good to be known in my community by name. To be greeted in public by students, church members, and neighbors is such a comfort on days when I am a little homesick.

The days are going by quicker and quicker. I think about how long I have been here and all that I have done and it baffles me. I have been so blessed with an amazing host family our relationship transforms each day; as strangers turn to friends and start to claim you as their daughter and sister. The sun always finds a way to shine and besides I always have loved a good storm.

Rollicking on a Moto

If you told me this time last year I would even think of getting on a motorcycle, I would have laughed in your face. This year in Rwanda is full of previously unthinkable adventures. This includes taking a moto for a thirty minute drive to visit a church once a

month. My moto driver, Safari, is awesome and I even enjoyed parts of our drive together.

The patience he has shown me is another example of how graceful my community is with my clumsy attempts to jump

into the culture here. Even when that means giving me practice rides to work and going at a snail's pace on rocky roads. It is with this generous spirit that the unthinkable becomes possible here in Rwanda.

Church

The walk to church is a short one, I walk the path between my host-home and ASPEK School. After I pass some banana trees I am at the church. There is often sounds of drums, singing, or laughter that invites me in. My favorite times I have spent here are on Saturdays; choir practices take up the afternoon, although I think sometimes the children's choir and I play more games than sing. I am slowly recognizing some of the songs they sing and will

hopefully learn them soon. Their favorite English songs have been "Joy" and "Jesus Loves Me Blues." We also enjoy the "Hokey-Pokey" and "Up Above My Head." They are learning my songs much quicker than I am learning theirs.

On Sundays I already have my assigned seat! Somethings are universally Lutheran. So far I have been invited to sing with the children a couple of times and I have held the of-

fering basket once.

I have quickly fallen in love with this congregation. I am extremely lucky to have a whole church who is willing to wait as Pastor stops service to make sure I am on the right page. They watch out for me and make sure I know I am loved. Their grace and willingness to invite me with open arms is beyond comprehension. I do not think I could have asked God for a better church family this year.



My home church this year.

ASPEK School

During the week I work with the students of a secondary school in the evenings. I really enjoy this experience because I primarily work with just the students meaning they get to decide what to do with their time. Right now that includes learning literature (aka I'm reading spark note summaries and trying to explain metaphors), an English Gospel Choir (we sing Hymns from the green book), and debate club. I am always over-

whelmed by the number of students who come for the literature study sessions. We actually have a lot of fun as I draw out stick figure explanations when words don't translate and as we try to keep characters straight together.

I really enjoy the time before activities as we wait for students to come. This is the time where a really wonderful group comes and talks about

their lives, dreams, and hopes for Rwanda. Or sometimes they just come and gossip about the school or test my Kinyarwanda. This time of fellowship with students and sometimes teachers is always a great time. I will miss the S6 students when they complete their studies this coming month but I am excited to see them continue to follow their dreams and be a positive force in their communities.

Office



My desk.

I am really starting to enjoy working in my little office at the Anglican Diocese of Kibungo. My current work includes collecting information and creating communication publications. This allowed me the opportunity to create a questionnaire that will be passed out soon and I am looking forward to applying the information we gather to future programming.

I also get to teach some days at the

Primary School. How this Lutheran international studies graduate was chosen to teach Social Studies and try to create a website is beyond me. But I enjoy every single minute of it!

I also will be attending the English service here and will hopefully be participating in it. So far I lead a prayer for the students of the secondary school, for their upcoming exams, since they make up most of

the congregation at this service.

Field visits to different congregations to meet with community development groups has been my favorite though! I love hearing how people come together to address the needs of their communities. It is inspiring to hear how the Word of God and gifts of service in His name can change not only a life but a community as well.

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<https://community.elca.org/yagm/give>

Prayer Requests-

I ask for continued prayers that I continue to learn Kinyarwanda more each day so I am able to communicate with more people. I also ask for prayers as the students I work with go into their school holiday; that exams are passed and renewal can be found.

Rollicking in the Kitchen

One of my favorite foods so far has been a flat bread called chapatti. I have learned there is two different kinds, lately we have been eating the hard one so that's the directions I will give.

I personally enjoy eating it with cut up tomatoes and onions or using it to make a burrito of sorts with avocado, eggs, rice, and beans. But we often have it plain for breakfast with African tea. My host mom can make it without having to measure anything!

From what I can gather from watching her, you mix around 3-4 cups of flour (she adds to it as she goes), an egg, a pinch or two of salt, a pinch

of instant yeast, a small spoonful of baking powder, and 1/2 a small coffee cup of water. Mix by hand until it forms a ball of dough. [The rest of the directions I have actually been able to help with!]

Take small sections of the dough and flatten them with a rolling pin like you would with a pie crust. Then using a little oil you fry them over a medium flame. You flip it so that each side cooks two or three times. The bread should be a little browned and air bubbles will form. Its handy to have a spoon to smash the big air bubbles that form, I haven't figured out the best technique for this yet. This will yield around 8-10 pieces.

As you have to enjoy chapatti with African Tea bring to a boil a mixture of water, milk, black tea, and ginger powder. Again Mama doesn't measure anything but from daily observations I would follow the directions of your tea leaves based on how much you want to make (we make a couple pitchers worth at a time) and then add an equal amount of milk to the water. Ginger is optional and you sprinkle in just a small amount (we use 1/4 a capful for our big batch). After you boil strain it into a container and serve with lots of raw sugar! You can also add instant coffee into the mix for a latte like creation.