



# UPDATE from MUTARE



Larry and Jane Kies  
Africa University  
Box 1320  
Mutare Zimbabwe  
email- LKies@Africau.edu

*Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*  
*Luke 12:7*

Newsletter  
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Easter greetings from Africa University!

Southern Africa has made the international news recently. The poor rainy season was not enough to capture the attention of the press. Here on campus we had received less than half of the normal rainfall. We were partially saved by our irrigation system, but most area small-scale farmers without access to irrigation will harvest almost no maize/corn, their staple food.

But then the weekend of 16-17 March saw Cyclone Idai make landfall. The four inches of rain received in this area were too late for most crops, but at least there was no major infrastructural damage on campus or nearby.

However, the Chimanimani district south of here received 20 inches in a day, with scores of deaths from drowning and house collapses, and roads and bridges washed out so that whole villages were accessible only by helicopter. East of here in Mozambique, the coastal city of Beira was hit even harder. Several of Jane's Mozambican students had still not heard from their families, a week later.

We don't know exactly what is happening across the border, but Zimbabwean friends involved in the relief effort in Chimanimani tell heart-warming stories of incredible generosity and selfless, non-stop action by both local residents but also groups in Mutare as well as Harare and other cities. International groups such as UMCOR, Red Cross and World Vision are also involved- both in short-term assistance, but also in long-term rehabilitation and development.

*At the same time, we read about flooding and potential flooding in Larry's birth-state of Iowa and neighboring states, so are reminded that natural disasters are not limited to one corner of the globe.*

Reading about responses to the disasters in both places, we are also reminded how important it is to have capable and compassionate members of the community who can help both as first responders and in the long-haul of improving infrastructure and systems to make them more resilient in the future.

In January we flew to Johannesburg to attend a church conference on Agriculture and the Church in Africa. It was exciting to meet many AU Agriculture students that have become missionaries, using their skills to lead Agriculture development in other African countries as they take the gospel out to the communities they work with.



*Larry, with AU Ag grads who are currently UMC missionaries, and former AU ViceChancellor Prof Tagwira.*

We met other AU graduates who are missionaries involved in church planting as well as health care and other roles.

In our Christmas email newsletter we mentioned two swallows that made the ceiling of our veranda their chosen building site. The previous year their efforts ended in disaster when, because of its weight, the nest became detached from the ceiling. This year when we saw that they were determined to give it another go, we gave them a little help by inserting in the ceiling woodscrews that provided enough support that the birds successfully raised two young ones.



*Momma swallow and two offspring*

In the same vein, we know that it is our call as Christians in mission to work alongside local residents so that they can build for themselves strong, resilient systems and communities. A major goal of AU is to help provide some of the leaders needed to cope with an ever-changing world, dealing with climate change and other challenges. Africa University- Investing in Africa's future.

Thanks to all who have helped to keep the Dream Alive- through scholarship support (most of the Agricultural missionaries mentioned were recipients of such help)



*Remembrance and Precious- present-day Ag students, future leaders*

and/or developing the living laboratory which is the AU Farm (current needs are for upgraded irrigation pumps and a new fertilizer spreader).

Thanks also to those who have expressed concern and offered help in dealing with the pressing needs caused by Cyclone Idai.

**Church Visits**

We will not be visiting churches this year, but plan to be back in the USA in 2020, probably from July to September. We will let you know more detailed plans early next year.

A good friend helped us put together a 5-minute video highlighting our roles here at AU. It is available on Facebook ('Larry Kies'), YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSiKKSJxWF4>) or you can email us for a link to GoogleDocs.

**Family News**

*Michael, in the second semester of his Software Engineering degree program at Iowa State, is now often called by his Shona name, Simba.*

Carly is very excited about her University of Queensland campus ministry in Brisbane Australia. More on her can be seen at [www.cmfi.org/ckies](http://www.cmfi.org/ckies)

Pule and Christine loved the winter in Boulder, Colorado, and *Ben in New York was really pleased to finish a major project at Flatiron.*

- Please pray for:
- those seriously affected by recent natural disasters-
    - Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe, Mozambique
    - .....and Malawi
    - the disastrous rainy season in Zimbabwe
    - the flooding in the Midwest USA
  - *those responding on-site to provide immediate assistance to those in need*
  - Africa University and other institutions training the leaders of tomorrow to find long-term strategies to both cope with present challenges and avoid future disasters
  - *For each person to discern how they can best help*

As always, thank you for your support, love, cards, prayers, thoughts, and emails, especially during this (soon-to-be) Easter season!

Yours and His,  
Larry and Jane Kies

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