

## Thank you &amp; Spring Update

Dear friends

In last month's letter, I was honored to be able to announce the purchase of the new mission car, and to thank the many people that helped to make that happen. I'd like to begin this article with another thank you to some very special people.

Some of you may not know that our mission in Ghana has supporters that do not attend First Lutheran. Many of these people have become friends over the years, and they love the kids and the mission. And even though they do not attend First Lutheran, at all, or anymore, they have been faithful in their giving. I would like to send out my deepest thanks to our friends in the cities of: Mount Vernon, Sandusky, Willoughby, Avon, & Norwalk Ohio. Also my deepest thanks to my new friends in Texas. I'd like to thank all of you for the support that you have demonstrated over the years, the contributions you have made to the mission, here in Ghana, & particularly towards the purchase of the new car.

From early January, and every day since, I have been having exciting experiences, that continue to make good impressions on me, my family, the people of Akrapa, and the school children. It is all about the brand-new Suzuki Vitara that has come to replace the eighteen-year old Jeep that I have used since 2003 (14 years!)

The people of Akrapa continue to say, "Osofo" (Reverend/Pastor) *enya car fofor*, which means, 'Pastor has a new car.' Then they will come around touching the car to show their admiration. The people in the town, are as excited as I am that a new car is in town, because they have been seeing the Jeep for over a decade. For me and my family, the joy of riding in the very first NEW car we have ever owned, still makes it so exciting, and we are so grateful to First Lutheran Church, the Church Council, and all of the many other people who gave to make this possible. The immediate benefits are not only the drastic fall in fuel usage and no service costs - because it is under warranty - but, also more importantly, so much more comfort as compared with the old Jeep. Now my back and waist don't hurt as much as it did riding in the Jeep. THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH.

Now to give you a little update on things that are happening in Akrapa. I have begun repairing the old windows and doors in the mission school, and even replaced some teachers' teaching tables. This is making the new head teacher so happy. Akrapa has welcomed a new head teacher, Ms. Eva Turkson. She is married with one child. She is forty-five years old and has been a teacher for the past fifteen years. This is Ms. Eva Turkson's very first appointment and elevation into headship of a primary school, coming to replace Ms. Stella Colecraft, who has been relocated to join the district office staff.

The Akrapa school has a mix of classroom and subject teachers. The classroom teachers are in charge of the classroom, while the subject-teachers go in only when they go to teach a specific subject, like for example, English. Currently we have a total of sixteen teachers, in the basic school of six classrooms and two kindergarten classrooms.

The total student population has risen from 115 to 140 at the beginning of the 2016/2017 academic year. It was around a hundred at the close of the 2015/2016 academic year, but started increasing when the new year began. This growth unfortunately has limits due to space, otherwise it would be going to a couple of hundred. If in the future, we could build more classrooms on to the school, the population of students would continue to rise. It is my prayer that someday we can do that, to help more and more children.

Also one of the primary reasons for the population growth at the Akrapa school is due to the school feeding (five days a week) that the pupils enjoy. Currently, only Akrapa school is feeding its students. A feeding program like ours was initiated by the central government, for all primary schools, but due to poor management and accountability of the managers of the program, it has collapsed in all the public schools except a few. Akrapa, is thus, a unique school! Our school breakfast program continues, due to loving donations from members of FLC, and friends of the mission. My trusted helper Mercy, at the school, and I are in charge of the breakfast program. And every single dollar that is donated for that, goes directly into food for the students.

The school will go on two weeks of recess for the Passion Week (Palm Sunday through Easter), for the children to have a break, and will resume a few days after Easter.

Once again, I thank you all of you dear friends. The blessings of God the Father Almighty be upon you all.

Blessings,  
Pastor Ben