

Dear Friends,

We are celebrating 30 years of the Ghana Mission with a wonderful project for the children of the Akrampa School. We're in the process of doing a major update on the *original* school buildings by **installing new roofs and new doors & windows**. We will also be **adding gutters** and a **large cistern** to create a **rain catchment system** at the school to provide additional fresh water.

My relationship with *First Lutheran Church (FLC)*, in Lorain, began on my very first trip to the United States & Ohio in 1993. Our official mission work together began over the following two years (1994-1995) after I had returned to Ghana. I have been very blessed to be able to return to Ohio numerous times over the years to spend time, worship, make new friends and even receive much needed medical care. In 2003, Julie and I were both able to come to Ohio. This was Julie's first trip! Then I returned again, by myself, in 2009 & 2013. In 2017, Julie was again with me on my trip to Ohio, and this was the first trip where we visited *Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran Church* and began our friendship with Pastor Angela and our Bethesda congregation. Our most recent trip to Ohio was in the summer of 2024 when both Julie and I were able to come to Ohio and stay for a little over 5 months.

It is our 2024 trip with which I want to discuss. It was during our 2024 trip to Ohio when I shared with both the FLC and Bethesda congregations that the roofs on the *original 7 classrooms* of the Akrampa School were in horrible shape and desperately needed to be replaced. To the Glory of God, the *FLC Church Council* approved our fundraising request and immediately the congregation of FLC began to give money. In December of 2024, our faithful partner church, *Bethesda*, gave a very generous donation to the Roof Project! Thank you! We have also received multiple generous donations from some of our "Friends of the Mission", which are individuals who do not attend either FLC or Bethesda & live in other cities of Ohio, or states, but have become supporters of our Ghana Mission. Thank you to each and every one of you! May the Lord bless you!

In December of 2024, when Julie and I returned home from Ohio, I immediately got to work on the beginnings of the *Ghana School Roof Project*. I am so happy that at this time, I can share some photos with you of the first phase of this project. The photos you will see in this article are the 'before' photos & the early construction photos showing the beginnings of the project. I'd like to thank the Chair of the Ghana Committee, Kristen, for assisting with this article, by organizing, sorting and posting all of my photos into this storyline for you, the reader.

This Ghana Mission would not be possible without the loving, faithful and ongoing financial support and prayers of all of you. Please know that everything you do to help this mission is one step forward in improving the lives of all of the children in our mission village of Akrampa. And we can never thank you enough. Please read on to see the first photos of the Ghana School Roof Project!

Ghana School Roof Project: 2024 - 2025 ~ ~ Phase 1 - Before & Removal & Construction:



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Above: Photos showing the two original 'blocks' of the **Akrampa School**: showing the OLD roofs, straight on, and the edge, (roofline). These show the terrible condition that the old roofs were in, the need for the new roofs, and the lack of gutters on the old roofs.

Photo 1 - Shows the front side of the *Upper Primary Block* of the school (Grades 4th-6th). And it shows the side profile of the *Lower Primary Block* of the school (Grades 1st - 3rd).

Photo 2 - Shows a close-up view of the old roof on the Upper Primary Block of the school.

Photo 3 - Shows the backside, of the Lower Primary Block of the school, and the terrible condition of the old roof.

Photos 4 & 5 - Shows two angles of the Upper Primary Block, Grades 4th -6th of the school, again showing the terrible condition of the roof. This block of the school still has the original white sign on the front of it, saying that the building was built and dedicated by *First Lutheran Church*.

Kindergarten Students:

The old and new Kindergarten building and their unique situation at Akrampa School:

As stated on Page 2, the Lower & Upper Primary blocks of the Akrampa School are home to Grades 1st - 6th. *Then of course the question is, where are the Kindergarten students?*

When the school was first built, there were not a lot of Kindergarten students, and a section of the Lower Primary Block of Classrooms was sectioned off to teach the Kindergarten age students. As the years progressed the Kindergarten population was growing steadily, and a separate small building was built to house our tiny Kindergarten students.

And most recently, in *the last few years* the Kindergarten population had grown SO much that the parents and community of Akrampa began to build a NEW building to house the ever-growing Kindergarten students. When the community ran out of money and had to stop in the middle of building, I went to the Ghana Committee and asked for help. At that time, (2024) a family in Ohio donated the money to finish the New Kindergarten Building. What we have done is, to attach the New KG (Kindergarten) building to the Old KG Building, thus creating one large KG building to house all of our amazing little students. I wrote about this fully in my May 2024 article.

Let's take a look at some of the photos of Kindergarten (KG) Building with its bright new paint in Blue and White, and what is happening with the roof situation for that building.



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Above: Photo 6 - shows the entire Kindergarten (KG) Building (blue and white). The *left* side of the building is the New side, whose construction was completed in spring of 2024. The *right* side of the building is the Old Kindergarten classroom, and it is getting a new roof & some updates as part of the *Ghana School Roof Project of 2025*.

Kindergarten, Lower Primary Block, and Preparation Photos:



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Above: Photo 7 - Shows the Front of the Kindergarten (KG) Building (Blue & White) -- the Left side is the newly constructed part of the building from 2024 & Right side of the building is the Old KG Classroom, still with the Old Roof on it. Also in Photo 7, to the *far-left side of the photo* is the backside of the Lower Primary Block of the school (yellow), showing the damaged old roof.

Photo 8 - Shows the van belonging to the Roofing Company - Roof Depot.

Photo 9 - This is a photo of two very special young men. These two young men are 2023 Graduates of our Akrampa School (finishing 9th Grade at our school), who have gone into the profession of Iron Fabricators. They are part of the construction team who are working on our project. They will be working to create the new iron supports, that you will see in photos later in this article.

Construction on the Old Kindergarten (or KG) Building:



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Above: Photo 10 - Shows the front of the New section of the Kindergarten building, along with some of the construction workers. On the far-left side of *photo #10*, you can see the backside corner of the Lower Primary Block (yellow) of the school, with its roof already removed and the masonry blocks piled up and ready for the construction.

Photo 11 - Shows the Old section of the Kindergarten Building with its roof already removed to prepare for its replacement as part of the *2025 Ghana School Roof Project*.

Photos 12 & 13 - Both show the construction happening to the Old section of the KG Building. The roof line will be built up and extended, to match the new side, thus completing the covered "walkway" fully across the front of the building. This will allow for potential teaching to be done outside, but covered, if desired - while also providing additional shelter from rain and sun.

Removal of the Old, Damaged Roofs:

The Roofs on all of the *original* blocks of the Akrampa School were between **24-29 Years** old, and they were all leaking. This made the two rainy seasons that Ghana has each year, very uncomfortable and unsafe for us to have our students in the school while rain was leaking into the classrooms. Again, we cannot begin to express our thanks to all of you for helping the students!



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Above: Photos 14, 15, 16 & 17 - Show the contractor and his team removing the old roofs to begin the process of replacement.

Old Roofs Removed:



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Above: Photo 18 - Shows the construction team with the roof removed from the Upper Primary (4th - 6th Grade) Block of Classrooms.

Photo 19 - Also shows the Upper Primary Block of Classrooms with the roof removed. But, if you look at the far-right corner of photo #19, you will see the mason work beginning on the front of the Lower Primary Block of Classrooms. This new mason work will allow us to raise the pitch of the new roof, and make the supports stronger.

Photo 20 - Shows the backside of the Lower Primary Block of Classrooms (painted yellow) which are the 1st - 3rd Grade Classrooms, without its roof. And you can see just a bit of the Kindergarten Building on the far-right of the photo.

Photo 21 - Shows the front of the Lower Primary Block of Classrooms without its roof.

New Support Pillars on the exterior of the Akrampa School:

As we prepare for the new roofs to go onto the school, we are adding new support pillars to the exterior of the school. These replace the old and crumbling support pillars that were built at the same time as the school, approaching 30 years ago. The NEW support pillars have an iron 'spine' on the inside, that are being done on site by our two Akrampa Graduates, shown earlier in Photo #9. Once these iron supports are ready, the concrete work is done to fix them into the foundation of the school, and concrete block is installed around the iron to complete the pillar.

By adding these new support pillars, we make the school, and the roof stronger. But the additional benefit is that this allows us to raise the height and pitch of the New Roofs. A steeper pitch to the *new roofs* will allow the rainwater to run down into the new gutters we will be installing, and then into our new cistern for rain catchment.



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Above: Photo 22 - Iron Supports are fabricated and installed into the ground at the back of the Lower Primary Block (1st -3rd Grade) of the School. They are braced to stay level while the concrete at the base dries fully.

Photos 23 - New Iron Supports are seen at the front of the Lower Primary Block of the School, with fresh concrete at their base also.

New Support Pillars, Continued ~ More photos coming soon ... of the next phase of work ...



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Above: Photo 24 - Also showing two more of the Iron Pillars on the Lower Primary Block of the school.

Photo 25 - Shows all of the concrete blocks waiting for the mason to begin building the pillars. This photo also shows the Old roof partially removed, and one of the construction team members.



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Above: Photos 26 & 27 - Both photos show the new mason work being done for the Support Pillars of the Lower Primary Block of the Akrampa School. These 27 photos show the **first phase** of the work.

Progress on the Roof Project is still going very well. Stay tuned as I will be sending more photos soon! Blessings, Pastor Ben Wilson -- with assistance from Kristen Anthony, Ghana Committee Chair