



# The McClarkin Messenger

December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

Dear Friends,

Christmas is certainly an unforgettable experience in South Sudan! Without all the commercialization it's easier to see Christ at the center of the holiday. There is no tradition of gift-giving at this time of year, so you won't find tribesmen running through the market trying to find presents. A new set of clothes is often bought, but even that isn't necessary. So what's so special about Christmas here? Community! South Sudanese don't think as much about *family* gatherings as about *community* gatherings.

At the Hope4Sudan Compound, a bull is purchased for the Christmas celebration each year. It's slaughtered after a late night prayer meeting on Christmas Eve. The boarding boys then start cooking the meat over open fires at 4 a.m. so it will be ready to eat by late afternoon on Christmas Day. This slow-cooked beef, along with beans and *nyatap* (cornmeal mush) is served to more than a thousand tribesmen who come to celebrate together. Prior to the grand feast there's a celebration service in the church with singing and dancing Toposa-style. A Christmas you're sure to never forget!



## Visitors from Afar

During our recent itineration in the States we met Travis and Jessi Lowe out of Bluefield, West Virginia.

After speaking in their church, our friendship continued developing. When God gave them a burden to come over and see the work here, plans soon began to formulate.

Just last month, God brought the Lowes to South Sudan. They ministered to us while also scouting out the place in preparation for a future team. Their team, which is being planned for next year, will help teach and train our young men on church leadership and the Holy Spirit.



## Prayer Needed!

- Ethan will be having a minor surgery in mid-January. Pray that both surgery and recovery will go well.
- After the holidays our family will be going through some major transitions. Latoya will be attending East Africa Bible College in Eldoret, Kenya, and Ethan will be going with her to begin pre-school in Kenya. I will still be in South Sudan and looking forward to their visits during Latoya's school breaks. Please pray for this transition and the funding needed in it – that God would provide, cause things to go smoothly, and grant the grace to sustain each of us.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours!*

*Greg, Latoya & Ethan*

### *The H4S Boys' Boarding Room*



### *Ethan's Corner*

Ethan is catching on fast here. He can already tell the difference between tribal groups and knows who to greet in Toposa. One of his favorite things to do is to hang out in the clinic and greet patients with “Maata” as they enter.

He also likes going to the boys' dorm room and hanging out with them. Ethan really enjoys learning the language, and the boys are definitely excited to teach him. He now knows more of the local language than I (Greg) do, and I've been in and out of South Sudan for the past eight years!