



Living Waters International, Inc.

- Aid for African Catholic Missions -

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Advent Newsletter
December 2023

Living Waters' mission is the support of Roman Catholic missionary and international development projects in Africa.

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A Way Forward

by Stephen Zimmerman

As Christians, we should not expect to journey through this earthly life without being asked to bear some crosses. For us at Living Waters International, 2022 and 2023 have proven to be no exception. Unexpected illness of a key team member, Karen Prunty, put our future in jeopardy.

But as Christians, we further believe that God does not present crosses in our lives without providing us the means to bear and overcome life's challenges. Through our prayers and confidence in His Wisdom, and by His Grace and Providence, He has provided a Way Forward for Living Waters International. Shukrani Kwa Mungu! (Thanks be to God!!)

Today, we want to introduce five key individuals who have come forward and we believe will be instrumental in effecting the way forward for Living Waters to continue its mission. Their stories ensue.

A LEAP INTO THE DARK

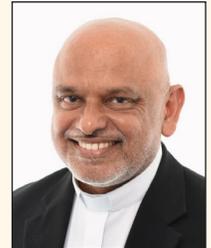
For everything, there is a season, and a time for every purpose under Heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1.)

These were the opening words last February from LWI's formal announcement to the MSFS that their mission was winding up their activities in June 2024. My name is Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, MSFS, and this was more than a shock for me, my response was: LWI may have a season, but I believe our relationship and our beautiful memories cannot be limited to a season. It simply could not come to an end.

This was shocking because the history of MSFS East Africa as well as my missionary life in Tanzania was very much intertwined with LWI. I first met Steve Zimmerman and his wife Mary in 1994 in Tanzania; our relationship intensified when I became Provincial of East Africa, 2011-2017.

Having consulted with confrères who've been associated with LWI, I proposed to Steve, Brian, and Karen, the possibility of keeping LWI alive through the instrumentality of MSFS. It was a leap into the dark. I did not know where the right, competent, and committed people would come from, but the Holy Spirit whispered to me, "God will provide." Only this faith kept me going.

True! God provided. Living Waters was open to the idea, despite many uncertainties. We had several email communications and online meetings. Mr Jeff Brigman and Ms Yolanda Woods came on the scene under Fr. Jomon Joseph, MSFS, from Prince of Peace Parish, San Antonio TX, and providentially, I had met Ms. Maria VanderMeer at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Allegan, Michigan during a holiday ministry last January. When I presented to her our need to staff LWI, she considered it a new vocation and accepted it gladly.



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"It is
Christmas
every time you
let God love
others
through you."

-Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Peace and joy
to you this
Christmas,
and throughout
the New Year.

From
all of us at
Living Waters



This entire process was eye-opening to learn of the great volume of volunteer work done by LWI. It was also a chance for me to interact with persons that otherwise I had communicated solely through email. For the MSFS as well as many other religious congregations, Living Waters is not merely a funding agency but a partner in our missionary endeavours. Long live LWI! May God bless them, and you, its benefactors. It is with deep joy and gratitude I share the unfolding events of this past year.

A LEGACY CONTINUES

I am Father Jomon Joseph MSFS, currently serving as the Pastor of Prince of Peace Catholic Church within the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas, and now as a board member for Living Waters. Having arrived in the United States in 2019, my prior fifteen-year ministry was dedicated to service in East Africa. Reflecting on Proverbs 3:27 – "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to act," I received the news during consultations with my superiors, learning about the imminent closure of Living Waters International (LWI), a wonderful organization that has positively impacted thousands in Africa and beyond.



The decision to close down LWI was disheartening for us and potentially disastrous for the program beneficiaries. This led us to investigate the feasibility of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales (MSFS) participating in efforts to continue LWI's impactful legacy. When sharing this development with parishioners Jeff and Yolanda, they wholeheartedly committed to supporting the mission of LWI. I am confident that their collaboration, alongside Maria, fueled by their profound dedication to Christ and humanity, will keep LWI alive, vibrant, and helping God's children for many years to come.

Greetings, I am Jeff Brigman, hailing from the state of Texas. My roots trace back to Waxahachie, Texas, where I was born and raised. Over the course of my life, I have experienced living in different parts of Texas, and I have established my permanent residence in San Antonio.



A few years ago, I endured the loss of my beloved wife due to a prolonged illness. Together we had a daughter from whom I take immense pride and joy. Her outstanding academic achievements, deep-seated passion, and unwavering faith have led her into a teaching career. Subsequently, I have taken on the responsibility of caring for my elderly mother during her golden years. Before dedicating my time to caregiving for my ailing wife, my professional journey was mainly anchored in finance and technology. Throughout my life, one enduring truth has consistently resonated with me: I have always found serenity and a sense of purpose in serving the Lord.

The privilege of collaborating with Fr. Joe Joseph, MSFS, assumed leadership at the Prince of Peace Parish Community, has been a source of great satisfaction. Fr. Joe's fervent discussions regarding the divine influence channeled through organizations like Living Waters International to support diverse mission requirements have captivated my utmost attention. I sensed a profound calling to contribute my skills and abilities to such a noble and faith-driven organization.

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While we were already extending our support to several missions in Africa in various capacities, Fr. Joe approached me with a proposal to join the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales in bolstering the mission of Living Waters International. Following initial discussions with Fr. Johnson MSFS, the Assistant Superior General, and the esteemed board members of Living Waters International, I am elated to announce my commitment

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GORETTI FUNDRAISERS



Thank you once again Friends of Living Waters in Wrightstown, and Antigo! Early September, Goretti went through her fourth reconstructive surgery to reposition her pelvic bone, and to correct her bowed legs. To all volunteers, donors, patrons, and Catholic Financial Life: "Thank you so much for being a part of the journey of Goretti. I pray that God meets each one of you at the point of your needs and rewards you in a mighty way."

- Goretti's Aunt Feliciano



to share my knowledge, experience, and talents with those in need. The words of Matthew 25:40 resonate with me: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." As a board member of LWI, I eagerly anticipate collaborating with all of you in our shared mission to alleviate human suffering and advance the cause of evangelization.

My name is Maria VanderMeer and I live in the small town of Allegan, Michigan. As with any Michigander, I can show you exactly where I live by holding up my hand and pointing to its exact location. I am a widow of five years and I have two grown married daughters and 4 amazing grandsons. I currently work full-time as an Administrative Assistant to the Human Resources Department for Allegan Area ESA, and I will be retiring in July of 2024. For 33 years, I have been involved in our parish's faith formation for all age groups. I am currently a sacristan, and Confirmation teacher.



Fr. Johnson Kallidukil, MSFS, is the person who introduced me to Living Waters International. The pastor at my church was on vacation, and Fr. Johnson filled in for him for one month. During that month, my family and I got to know him well, and his passion for the people of Africa, especially Tanzania. He told us many stories of his life and work there. He spoke of the work that LWI was doing in Africa. Father introduced us to Goretti and shared her story. A few months later I got an email from Fr. Johnson with a request to become involved in the mission of LWI. After much prayer, I decided that it was something that I would like to pursue.

"I believe that my gift of passion to assist others in need will flow into my work for Living Waters"

Working in human resources lends the following gifts for the secretarial responsibilities in LWI: First, I am a "people person." I enjoy meeting new people and hearing their stories. Secondly, I believe that my gift of passion to assist others in need will flow into my work for Living Waters - for those less fortunate. There is a passage in the bible that I try to live up to, "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more." (Lk 12:48). God has blessed me and my family with so much - it is my turn to bless others. I am excited and happy to join the wonderful people of LWI as Student Sponsor Coordinator. Thank you for the opportunity, your passion is contagious.

My name is Yolanda Woods. I currently live in San Antonio, Texas; my hometown is Uvalde, Texas. I retired from teaching high school science after my husband passed away in 2015. My father passed away in 2021, so I now care for my mother at my home. Time also allows me to volunteer in parish ministries, including lector, sacristan, and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.



I have been blessed with good communication skills and was the editor of my college newspaper. I have worked in bookkeeping jobs since high school and helped my husband with his business using QuickBooks and Quicken.

As a member of the Prince of Peace Rosary Guild, I make mission cord rosaries. We aim to promote worldwide devotion to our Blessed Mother by providing rosaries to both domestic and foreign missions. When a missionary visits a community, they provide instant spiritual guidance and comfort to the faithful. Yet, missionaries cannot always be there, and the gift of the rosary stands to fill the faithful with strength and comfort in the face of hardship. Our rosaries are sent to the mission fields in India and Africa.

Father Jomon Joseph, MSFS, asked if I would help with the mission of Living Waters International. Even though I have never been to Africa, I have always felt a special affinity for its people. I am honored by Father Jomon's faith in me and my skills to do my part in helping LWI in its mission to alleviate human suffering and evangelize Africa.



Spotlight

By Brian & Karen Prunty

Today, we shine the light on Richard (Dick) Vanden Wymelenberg of Wrightstown who went to our heavenly Father on October 8, 2023. Dick is the father of Karen Prunty, one of the co-founders of Living Waters.

Dick and his wife of 70 years, Bonnie, have been supporters of Living Waters for over 25 years. Over that span they generously sponsored the education of poor African children. They also

supported other Living Water efforts to assist the poor by holding an annual grill-out with pies fundraiser, at the family business, Dick's Family Foods

in Wrightstown. Over the years, Bonnie has baked hundreds of pies, and together with a host of volunteers raised over \$25,000! Karen summed her parents' efforts by saying, "My brothers and sisters are so blessed to have such wonderful parents. They showed us by their example, how to live the Golden-Rule."

In lieu of flowers at the funeral, the family asked for donations for Living Waters. "We are stunned by the generosity of so many; nearly \$10,000 was gifted! In the coming weeks I look forward to working with the other board members on deciding how this money should be utilized," noted Karen.



Left to right: Karen, Bonnie, Brian & Dick



Travels to Malawi

By Victoria Koss



Victoria with students from Mkotamo Primary School.



Victoria and Steve with Franciscan Sisters of the Likuni Mission Hospital in Malawi

Stanley Koss of St Wencel's Parish, Neva, WI, began supporting a priest in Malawi 25 years ago. In 2016, when Stanley was 93, he asked his son Tom to take over, which he has done ever since. Tom funded Fr. Cleophas' requests by wiring money directly to him in Malawi. When I met Tom in 2019, I was drawn to this grass-roots cause and was interested in donating, but I preferred a more conventional vehicle. We reached out to Living Waters International to establish a way that we could wire money to the Mangochi Diocese. LWI generously agreed to our request. Thus, for the past three years, Tom's and my donations have been gifted through LWI.

Tom and I were married in June 2023 and decided that we should visit our projects personally. Since Tom had responsibilities, which prevented him from traveling, I asked Steve Zimmerman of LWI, if he would accompany me on a trip to Malawi. He agreed, and our two-week adventure began in October. Since Steve had visited Malawi previously, we were welcomed by many sisters whom Steve knew. This was a life-changing trip for me! I've done mission work in the past but had never seen poverty on this scale. Because of LWI, we can and will make a difference in Malawi. LWI has proven to be an extraordinary vehicle for directing our donations.