

Dear friend,

October 2021

Greetings from Wilmore, Kentucky! Yes, we're back in the United States for a while. As the COVID pandemic travel restrictions began to ease around the world, we decided it was time for us to return to the States for several reasons. We felt a need to reconnect with our families as well as with our WGM International Ministries team since we've not had a chance to be together (with any of them!) since January 2020. So, in mid-September, we bought tickets to fly back arriving November 1st to spend three months in the U.S. That very same day, back in the U.S.A., Jon's mom was admitted to a hospital in Ft. Wayne, Indiana with severe abdominal pain. Little did we know then how our plans would change over the next few days.

The following day we traveled upcountry to Tenwek for scheduled meetings with the WGM Kenya Field global workers – another group that had not been able to gather in person since the beginning of the pandemic. Everyone was looking forward to being together again, so we planned a number of social activities, including a worship service in which we shared communion together. The next day was the annual business meeting of the field, though still interspersed with in-person fellowship. It was an encouraging and refreshing time for us to be with the WGM Kenya team.



While we were there, we continued receiving updates on Jon's mom as a few underlying physical issues were diagnosed in addition to the abdominal pain which had initially led to her hospitalization. We began to understand just how serious the situation was and started talking about changing the tickets we had just purchased in order to leave for the States earlier. As we drove back into Nairobi on Sunday the 19th, we made the decision to do just that. So, on Monday morning, we contacted our travel agent and were able to book flights to leave shortly after midnight the following night. That gave us just 36 hours to make the many arrangements necessary for us to be gone for what would now be more than four months, since we had also decided that we would stay through January as earlier planned.

We somehow managed to get everything done and were ready to go to the airport by 8:30 the following evening. We flew out of Nairobi at 1:30 AM on the morning of Wednesday, September 22nd and after one loooooooooooooong day of travel, arrived in Fort Wayne at 7 that same evening. We went straight from the airport to my sister's home, where Mom now was, having been moved there from the hospital and placed under hospice care. It was a special reunion as we gathered around her bed, and she expressed great joy that we had been able to come so quickly to be with her.

Jon & Vera Steury
507 ½ N. Lexington Ave.
Wilmore, KY 40390-1134
U.S.A.

Email: jon.steury@wgm.org
vera.steury@wgm.org
Cell: Jon – 859.753.6166
Vera – 859.753.6199
Web: www.wgm.org/steury

World Gospel Mission
P.O. Box 948
Marion, IN 46952-0948
U.S.A.



The next few days all run together in our minds as we took turns sitting by Mom’s bedside and helping to attend to her needs, along with occasional visits by hospice workers and other caregivers. There were moments of wakefulness and lucidity for Mom but she spent more and more time sleeping peacefully as well as more and more deeply. On the evening of our sixth day back, while we were sitting by her bed shortly after dinner, we noticed a perceptible slowing of her breathing and, gathering with family around her, we watched as Mom took her last breaths. It was a sad, but sacred moment as we witnessed the transition of our dear mother and beloved servant of God passing from time into eternity.



As I write this letter, we are putting together the final plans for Mom’s memorial service, which will be held Saturday, October 23rd at John Wesley Camp in High Point, North Carolina. John Wesley Camp played a big role in Mom’s spiritual formation, including her call to missions at the altar of the camp meeting when she was 13 years old. Mom was born and raised in North Carolina and regularly reminded us that it was “God’s country!” It will be a fitting place to pay her tribute along with many she loved who also loved her.



In the few weeks that we’ve been back we have enjoyed some special times with our kids and grandkids. We’re so glad they all live within twenty miles of each other and us here in central Kentucky! Just today, most of us attended a soccer game in which our older grandson, Toby, played. What fun, on a beautiful sunny yet crisp fall day! This is the first fall we’ve been able to enjoy since 2012.

Not all our days this past year and a half, since we were last in the States, have been sunny and enjoyable. These have been some of the hardest years of ministry we’ve faced in our history of serving with WGM. In the grand scheme of things, particularly with regard to the pandemic, our challenges, though they have seemed big at times, pale in comparison with those that others we know have faced. As we ponder that, it makes us grateful for the many ways we are blessed...with a sovereign Lord who orchestrates all the events of our lives, with a God who is “with us”—just as He promised, with family that loves us, with friends who give to support us and who remember us in prayer faithfully, with good health, and, yes, even with life! We both celebrate 60 years this year! (Right: We celebrated with a trip to Maasai Mara on Vera’s birthday.)



With love and appreciation for you,
Jon & Vera Steury