

Fwd: Finding Advent Joy!

1 message

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To: Mary Ellen Black <m.black@lmbc.org>

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From: **Tom & Melissa Kendall** <tkendall@abwe.cc>
Date: Sat, Dec 11, 2021 at 12:31 PM
Subject: Finding Advent Joy!
To: <a.odell@lmbc.org>

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Kendall Family News

December 2021



Finding Advent Joy

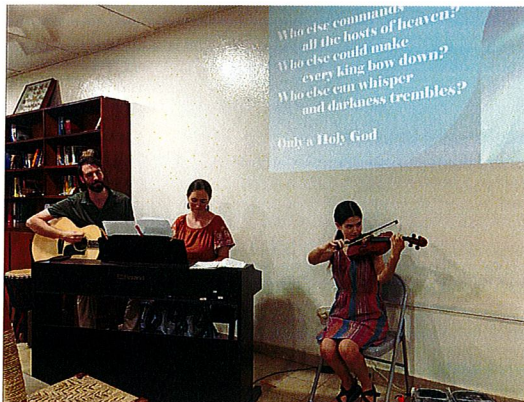
Christmas greetings to all our friends and family! As 2021 winds to a close and our thoughts turn to the significance and celebration of Jesus' birth, the surety of what Christ accomplished stands in stark contrast to the events of this crazy life.

Our next-door neighbors and ministry partners, the Mallay family, are living out this truth in graphic reality. As many of you know, their oldest daughter, Arwen, is suffering from cancer. While none of us knows the future, they have witnessed a significant decline in her health recently. You can read about that [here](#). One of the most eloquent, hope-giving, peace-restoring lines from it

states, *"Death can't ruin Christmas when Christmas has already ruined death."*

Yes!!

In grappling with this situation, especially in December, around Christmastime, they are holding fast to truth, to the sure promises of God. Even as they suffer much grief, they are experiencing grace, and they are a testimony to so many.



May their example encourage us all to meditate on and cling to the finished work of Jesus Christ in behalf of sinners, a work made possible when He became man! This whole world groans under a curse. In the face of all of it, we can sing that Jesus "comes to make his blessings flow, as far as the curse is found!" Joy to the world!

Ministry Opportunities

Thank you so much for your prayers for us in September as I traveled back to SC to speak at Bob Jones University during their Global Opportunities week. Pictured with me at our display table in the student center is Annette Williams, the previous hospital director who served in Togo for 40 years!



It was a wonderful privilege to speak to the student body in chapel, in workshops, in classes and in individual meetings.



October and November were some of the most unique weeks we've experienced so far. For 5 straight weeks, we either had a wedding or a funeral service. Never before in such a concentrated time have we experienced the up-and-down rhythm of life, the truth that "to everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1). Mingled with the joyous celebrations of two marriage ceremonies were the times of grief and mourning during three funeral services. One of them was a hospital employee who died suddenly at age 39, leaving a wife and 2 young children.



Needless to say, his death came as a shock to everyone. I had the opportunity to preach at his funeral the Gospel hope that, though every human being is under the curse of death, those in Christ have the hope of eternal life and await a certain resurrection! "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ, shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22).

The Local Church

The Togolese church needs your prayers. Just this past week, the Togo government announced that proof of vaccination against Covid-19 is now required for church attendance, effectively forcing vaccinations if people want to attend public worship. Pray for wisdom and discernment for the church leadership as they navigate what to do.

Thankfully, the pastors see this for what it is--a tactic of spiritual warfare, and not a public health issue (since people can frequent markets and sporting venues without any restrictions). As of now, they have decided collectively that the government can say what it wants to say, but that the church won't enforce it. Anyone who comes to public worship will be welcomed, and they will keep meeting as God commands and teaches. We are grateful for church leaders who are willing to take a stand! Please pray for your Togolese brothers and sisters in Christ, that God would grant wisdom, clarity, unity, courage and peace during this time.

Specific Prayer Requests

Thank you for your continued prayers for these requests:

1. For a Muslim background believer to train as a chaplain for our hospital ministry. There are still several unreached people groups in southern Togo from these predominately Muslim tribes.
2. For the Togolese church as they navigate government restrictions on gathering.
3. For the kids' club ministry in the Muslim community on Wednesday afternoons to bear fruit.
4. For Arwen Mallay to receive God's miraculous healing, or to receive His grace to walk through suffering and the valley of the shadow of death.

Thank you so much for your constant prayer for us and for the work in Togo!

Your ministry partners,

Tom & Melissa, Paton, Avery, Taylor, Christian, Celeste & Eden Kendall

