

The Downs

"All That We Have Is a Hallelujah"



STEADFAST
ROOTS

Dear Friends,

July/August 2026

The last time we wrote, we were in the thick of health concerns, loneliness, and transportation struggles. Today, however, it feels as though we are standing on a mountain high. Words fall short when we try to express our gratitude for the prayers of God's people and for the privilege of serving Him in Côte d'Ivoire. A song called "Gratitude" has been filling our hearts and minds each day. Its message captures exactly where we are: all that we have is a hallelujah.

As we look around our community, we often see needs far greater than we could ever meet. The phrase, "Do for one what you wish you could do for all," has stayed with us, encouraging us to help faithfully wherever God gives us an opportunity, stepping out in faith when funds are not present.

One such opportunity came through a little girl named Divine. She is two years old, and eight months ago she fell into a pot of boiling water, suffering third-degree burns on her right leg. Her family could not afford medical care, so her leg healed in a bent position, and she was no longer able to straighten it. Because of her age, she does not know her limits and would often try and run and play and rip open the skin behind her knee when she over-extended it. We found a doctor who could perform the surgery and asked Divine's mother, Kate, if she wanted to move forward. We could see the worry and burden in her eyes, but her answer was simple: "I just want my daughter to be able to run and play like a normal child."

During the operation, Kate sat and paced with the unmistakable concern of a mother waiting for news. Praise God, the surgery went well! Divine is now recovering and joy is slowly returning. Her recuperation should take about a month. After that, she may finally be able to run and play.

We are especially thankful to our friends at our home church who reached out and provided the funds for this surgery. Their generosity has been a tremendous blessing to Divine and her family—and to us as we have watched God provide through His people.



Divine and her momma, Kate, in recovery after surgery



The team of doctors who performed Divine's surgery.



Kate & Divine

Please pray for Divine's continued healing and for her family to see the love and faithfulness of Jesus through this experience. Thank you for praying, giving, and walking alongside us. We cannot do everything for everyone, but by God's grace, we can faithfully do for one what we wish we could do for all.

We are also praising God for His faithfulness with our vehicle. We eventually had a new motor installed and it has faithfully carried us on several small trips. As we shared in our last letter, we continue to pray that it will be a sound and dependable car for a good long while.

These past few months have not been without their struggles. Because we live on a small farm, death is an all-too-familiar part of life. We have lost baby goats, another goat, and several ducklings. Our girls have seen more of death than we would have chosen for them, but these losses have also opened the door for meaningful conversations. We have been able to remind them that our lives are but a vapor and that this is why we need Jesus to sustain us and choose to follow Him everyday.

There is also much to celebrate here at our church. The congregation has purchased property for a future church building and is now saving toward construction. On October 31, we will gather for a special celebration where each person will have an opportunity to give toward laying the foundation. Our pastor is stepping out in faith: the footings are already being dug, bricks are being prepared, and sand and gravel are being brought in. It reminds us of so many stories in Scripture in which God's people had to take a step of faith before they could see how He would provide. At the end of August, I (Tim) will be preaching a message titled, "When Gratitude Becomes Sacrifice." We are praying that God will use it to prepare our hearts to give joyfully and trust Him fully. We are not asking for you to give toward this celebration, but we ask you to pray that God will stretch the faith of our church. If you feel God leading you to do more than just pray, please reach out. We will gladly give any gifts to our church as they continue to step out by faith. We are grateful for those of you who have already been saving money for these bricks that will build a church.



Praises and Prayers:

Renewed health: Praise God with us for healing, restored strength, and the ability to continue serving.

A working vehicle: Praise God with us for providing a replacement motor and pray that our vehicle will remain dependable for a long time.

Divine's recovery: Praise God with us for a successful surgery and for the generosity of His people. Please pray for Divine's complete healing and for her family to see the love of Jesus.

Our church: Pray with us for the October 31 celebration -that God will be pleased with our sacrifices and provide what is needed to begin the church foundation.

Opportunities to serve: Pray that God will continue to show us how to do for one what we wish we could do for all, and that each act of compassion will point people to Jesus.

Tim, Sarah, Lucy, Hazel, & Eleanor