

Larry and I have been in Peki-Volta Region Ghana, Africa for just a little over 14 months. It seems like a long time when I think about how things have changed with our immediate family and with our extended family in the US.

My transition here started out kind of rough as far as my assignment with our Partner EP Presbyterian Church, Ghana. I was originally informed that I would be working with the EP Church's Community or Mobile Health Clinics. However once I arrived nothing had quite been set up. Principal Rev. Dr. Elymas Newell at the EP Seminary (where Larry is serving as a Lecturer to the Pastoral students and Catechist) introduced me to the Administrator at the local Government Hospital. During our meeting Principal, Administrator and I discussed the possibility of me serving the people of EP Church and the community of Peki in the Hospital. So until I had a permanent placement I was allowed to work at the Hospital and serve the community of Peki and surrounding Villages.

Over the next couple of months and after much discussion and emails between Rev. Marco Cable, Africa Executive, Rt. Rev. Seth Agidi, Moderator and Richard Atiemo-Ganyo, Health Services Administrator of the EP Church. I met with Rev. Agidi and Richard. During our meeting I was informed that the original placement was for me to work at the Dzemini Health Clinic, however it had been determined that this would not be feasible since there was NO housing available, transportation cost was too great, and traveling would be very hazardous and time consuming so this placement would not be in the best interest of my assignment.

With this in mind we discussed a placement at the Peki Government Hospital and at Dzake Community Health Clinic in Dzake. I had also suggested starting a Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar monitoring Clinic at the Seminary for the Faculty and Students. With this plan of action I would be able to serve with our Partner EP Presbyterian Church, Ghana and serve the people of Peki.

For the past 12 plus months I have been serving in this capacity. I have adjusted to doing things the way they are done in Ghana, which in some cases is quite different than what I am used to. I have learned that the people take care of each other. A hospital stay is nothing like what it is in the US. Where patients expect a lot of one on one care and everything is individualized, HIPPA is huge, food is ordered like you are in a restaurant, and at the click of a button you summon someone to assist with whatever is needed. You receive the care and supplies, medication, food needed and then are given the bill.

Here family members do A LOT of the care for the patients, they bring them food and water from home, they assist with daily grooming, they purchase items needed for care, if they are not available at the hospital. Medications and supplies, treatments sometimes have to be paid for prior to receiving. They are placed in multiple bed wards and privacy is hard to come by.

Sometimes supplies are not available and so they staff does what they can with what they have. It makes me sad when I see a patient that needs oxygen but there is not enough available so the sickest person is the one that gets it. Where as in the US you just hook up a cannula to the wall oxygen and you don't give it a second thought. Or when a patient needs to have a procedure but there aren't any

supplies. Or when a patient has been discharged but has to stay in the hospital because they don't have the money to pay their bill. These are all part of life here and the people and staff make the best of it.

I am happy to do the work that I do. I appreciate the people I work with. I enjoy the patients I help.

Peki has made us feel welcome and a part of the community. I thank the EP Theological Seminary for helping us over the last year to adjust to our time here.

I also want to thank all the people, organizations, churches that are supporting our work here and pray for continued blessing on each and every one of you.

Submitted by Debbie Colvin

Serving with Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana