

Dear Prayer Partners and Friends,

Departure day is fast approaching. I'm laughing that New Jersey has been preparing me for rainy season in Congo with our 21 or 22 days of rain out of 25 so far this month. Judy and I are supposed to go pick some strawberries this morning and then join the seniors from the Sparta EFC for a picnic, but wondering if it will still happen as it is raining once again.

The new septic system for my house has also been delayed most of the month due to the weather. When you live in a wet spot already, digging in the rain becomes impossible. They finally got 2 days this week so they were able to get the leach field almost done. My front yard is a real mess!!!! Ken has had to cut down 4 trees along the edge of the property so I've help get the branches and leaves loaded into his pick-up truck for trips to the dump. He's getting almost enough wood to burn in his wood stove for the winter. So that work is paying off in a different manner. BUT this coming week when they need to turn off electricity and water Ken and Judy will be gone for another trip to New Orleans with the youth group from a supporting church and I'll be on my way to Congo. Hopefully David and my younger brother Irv will be available when someone is needed to get into the house. Can't even make definite plans for that as there is more rain in the forecast for next week as I was watching the weather channel this morning. Maybe Ken will be back before they are able to finish. J

Wednesday morning I'll be meeting Rachel Bliss and Jill Hall at the Paris airport and we finish the trip together that night arriving in Bangui, CAR 5AM Thursday. Some of these plans changed when one of the 2 teams for July had to be canceled due to too many things going on in Congo. But Rachel Martin is already there and needs to work with Jill, from the accounting department in the National Office in Minneapolis. She needs to understand how money gets to Congo and help with setting up some systems for tracking funds so we don't get in any trouble with the IRS here in the USA. I'm going to work on getting people lined up to clean our Guest House in Bangui so we can use it when we bring teams in for the rest of this year. When the Brethren have teams of their own we can't use their facilities. Rachel B and I hope to spend time talking with leaders and women mostly about women's issues and how we can connect women here in the USA with needs there. We might also get to spend some time at Tandala unpacking some of those containers that finally arrived at Mogalo last Friday---less than 100 miles to truck to Tandala now.

By July 21 I will be heading back to Bangui to meet Kevin and Stu and the rest of the main team coming to participate in the CECU Pastors Conference and later some strategy meetings regarding theological education for the CECU in the years ahead. Some will be preaching for the Bible hour during the conference; some training in Church Planting; giving a session on Trust; working at the Elykia Center; and getting a vision for other needs in the medical work and in the churches of the CECU. They arrive in Bangui July 23 and I meet them and help feed them , etc till we head for Zongo and on to Gemena on Friday the 24th.. The Conference begins Sunday July 26-29.

Pray for:

- Safety in travels. Going via Bangui we have to cross the river into Zongo, DRC and then take a 10-12 hour truck trip to Gemena.
- My visa for DRC can be interpreted several ways. Pray that the people in DRC will agree with what the Embassy here in the USA says is OK for me with several crossings necessary.
- Preparations for the Pastor's Conference. They expect about 1200 pastors and wives to come and housing and meals for this crowd with no hotels, or catering services available is quite a project!!!!
- Prepared hearts to worship together and be encouraged for the ministries in which they are all involved.
- Good health for all---especially those coming from the USA.

Will keep you updated as the time progresses.

Thanks for your participation in prayer for the weeks ahead.

In Him,

Thelma

PS Yesterday Rachel Bliss had to cancel going with us at this time because of her husband's hospitalization with acute pancreatitis. He hasn't bounced back as quickly as he usually does and probably won't be out of the hospital till at least Tuesday (in since Wednesday). Pray for both of them ---for healing for Rocky, and for all the last minute changes for Rachel. Pray that a UPS overnight parcel will get to me before departure Tuesday afternoon. She has a project with the women of her church that is a nice connection with the orphans in Congo. The women's group has been helping with 2 of the poorer schools in their town. They've been asked to make some bags that would hang on the back of the chairs so the kids have a place to put notebooks, pencils, erasures, etc. Instead of the MN ladies making them, they are going to pay the tailors at the Elykia Center to make them and use some African fabrics. The schools are delighted with this connection and want to learn more about the orphan care program and the training being done at the Center.