

Dear friends

Warm greetings from us in Sumba during this joyful season. There is only one more day left until the new year. Looking back on the past year, we are amazed at how God works and has spared us. We have experienced many blessings, but there were also obstacles that made us more aware with our steps.

Starting with this month, the last 2 weeks we have had lots of rain. We are grateful because the water cistern is once again filled. It is now the beginning of the rainy season and there is a lot of fruit on the trees. Once again we can enjoy our mangoes, pine apple, avocados, bananas and other fruit.

This past year we have experienced many blessings. My heart is filled and sometimes I don't think we deserve them. God is so good and does good, He has answered many things on our wish list in ways we did not think was possible. Last year we struggled with finishing the boys dorm, but this was able to be completed in March. At the formal opening, I was asked what is planned next. My response was to get a water truck to help with the water shortages in the dry season, and to build 3 additional classrooms. Since last July we have been using our main hall, divided into 3 sections to accommodate all the classes, because of this we have been having our devotions under the tree outside. During the dry season our well does not produce enough water so we bring water up from the river or spring and fill up the cistern. Our prayers were answered quicker and in a surprising manner. July 1, I signed a contract with the government to receive 5 buildings: library, office, science lab, school clinic, and toilet. Unfortunately, we didn't get what we wanted, however the government did give us the amount of funds we indicated on our proposal. This came with the condition to have it used up towards school buildings and used up in 150 days. This has currently increased our work load regarding paperwork, and getting everything done. We are fortunate to have a good team to finish the work. Joni, who has returned from Israel in June, is a supervisor, along with Yanrus. We did manage to finish the work on December 24.

The purchase of the water truck also came at the right time. It was during the time when we needed lots of water to build the buildings and for general use in the home. We have been able to get enough water to supply the home and school. We have also been able to be a blessing and help those in the village when they need water, they villagers do pay a fee for the water. The fee the villagers pay help with maintenance of the truck and the salary of the driver.

December also gave us many surprises. I received two awards. The first was from the Provincial Government for my dedication to set up a learning community for principles and teachers. In this group there are a total of 8 schools. It is a place where we work together towards the improvement of schools and teaching. My friends and I started this group, however last year I became the leader. What makes this group special is that other villages can set up similar groups for encouragement to each other. The second, was from our local government (central Sumba) for our program "tree planting and green school". We hope the little things we have done will have an impact on those around us. Receiving these awards are just a "bonus" we do not do our work in hope for awards, but out of faithfulness to God.

On December 22, we had our Christmas celebration at the home. Here we had 515 children attend, the program went well and the children enjoyed it, despite the heavy rain and wind

and some getting wet. This year we had the children from all 3 mission posts come together. This was possible because we used the truck to pick the children up and return them back. It was a blessing to see so many happy faces. We did a second Christmas celebration at Karunggu Wacu, about 1 hour away. This was considered entertainment for the village. Here about 200 children came, also some of the parents came to watch the children's performance. This was an encouragement to see, in this village many still worship idols even if they say they are a Christian, making it a difficult village to work in. In the beginning only children and a few elderly would come to church, and sit on pieces of wood. Today they have their own minister and a much larger church. This year we did a donation of chairs so individuals can sit. This year we donated chairs to two churches, we especially thank SDF for helping us to do this.

Every year we have a Christmas program with the elderly. Usually we invite them to come to the home, have devotion, the kids sing or dance with them, listen to their story, have a warm meal before they go home and give them a pack of rice. But this time we couldn't do it because some of the staff were sick and everyone else was busy with the new building or report. This year we decided to bring a bag of food to their house. When the girls came back from handing out the bags, we heard many sad stories. Somebody said, 'thank you, tomorrow we will have a meal for Christmas. There's some of the elderly who poorly by themselves. Yustina used to visit them, read the bible with them but lately Yustina is busy with mission posts, the boys dorm and the school. We hope next year we will make a schedule again to visit them. They don't ask anything from us. They just need somebody to come and listen to them, that's the least we can do for them.

This past July we also bought a used six wheeler truck. We bought it to help us to finish the government project, however it is also useful as we needed another truck to help with the mission operations. We needed to take a loan to pay for it, we are now thankful to the donors of Sumba Mission to cover this cost and we can pay back the loan in full.

On behalf of our mission I would like to thank: Sumba Mission Canada, Sumba Mission Netherlands, SDF and all friends who keep supporting us to do this work. God has blessed us this year, and we pray may God bless you all with all your work. Even though the work has been busy this year it is becoming less at the moment. One prayer request is for more workers in the home. We especially need someone to help in the kitchen and with the toddlers.

As we move into the new year we do not know what we are going to face, or how we are going to handle obstacles. One thing we know for sure is that God is here and always will be. He never leaves us. I do not ask for many requests however this one I do ask. I wish He may give me health, strength and a sincere heart to finish this "homework". We don't know when our time will come to meet Him, but I hope when I meet Him, I can hear Him saying "come in and have a rest". Last week I went to my daughter's cemetery, in the late afternoon. I just sat there and watched the sky and the moon. It looked so beautiful and peaceful. Do I always have this peaceful heart? The answer is NO I DON'T, it has taken me some time to have peace after losing my daughter. I know through the pain, through the storm, He wants to say to us that He's not finished yet. May God guide us and hold our hands in our steps.

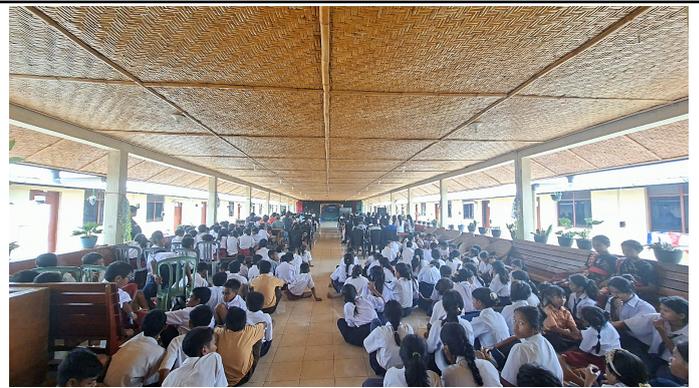
'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' This verse offers a powerful promise of God's presence, strength, and support, assuring us so we

don't need to fear the challenges because He is with us. Have a blessed Christmas and new year to all of you.



Christmas celebration with children from 3 mission posts.

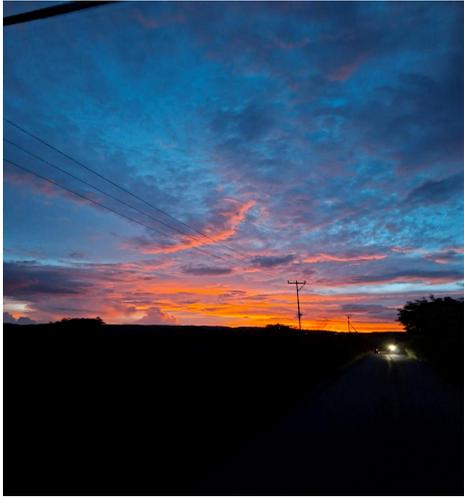
The children receive their report cards for this semester



Christmas in Karunggu Wacu

New garden





Beautiful sunset in Tanambanas

Christmas present for the elderly.



Christmas present for the elderly

