

# Newsletter 2

4 November 2017

# Linguère Living



Grace (Marem Fall) is the other YAGM in Linguère. Most of her days are spent between a dairy farm and a laterie. Joys at these places include milking cows by hand and preparing yogurt. Here we are pictured at the Lutheran Church in town, a small group that meets outdoors under a roof.



I was able to help prepare and shape the dough for beignets, or Senegalese doughnut, with assistance of course. Here I am with Fatou as we prepared a batch for an event at my worksite.



I visited the farm with Grace a couple of weeks ago and took part in the milking and measuring!

## New Weather

The rainy season has just ended here in Linguère. The heat comes and goes with the day and night, but one thing is always present – DUST. Side streets are made of the stuff and sections of the main roads unfavorable to the breeze allow it to gather. This makes for a scene vastly different from what I remember in North Dakota/Minnesota at this time of the year where the days grow shorter and waking up to a blanket of snow is not out of the question.

I often sit on the porch with my host family visiting after dinner (mostly listening). One night my host mother asked me if my home in America has sand. Uncertain of how to describe the rich dark soil in French or Wolof I replied that the ground I am accustomed to is black and very different. I added that there is snow and ice covering the ground for a large part of the year, to which she was dumbfounded.



## My New Job

### – Soins de Santé Primaire

I am adjusting to the new scenery and climate and find life here with YAGM to be just what I need at this point in life. My work is with a small resource center for individuals with HIV/AIDS. It is a part of a Senegalese-run non-profit called Senegalese Lutheran Development Services. Although it is an organization of the Lutheran church the majority of the employees are Muslim, which is the spiritual belief of most Senegalese people. Resources provided here include money for individuals to travel (whether that is to a pharmacy, the center, or the hospital), pharmaceuticals to ease life with HIV, milk for orphans afflicted with AIDS, and medications for surrounding villages. We also monitor the weight of these orphans and adult women in the program. This includes adults and infants whose medications and milk, respectively, are covered through SLDS. The adult women also meet regularly in a support group on the grounds here.

There is a Lutheran church in town with half a dozen adults and a dozen children typically in attendance. Church services last 1.5-2 hours. Since the liturgy and sermon are in either French or Pulaar I am unable to keep up, but hymnbooks in Pulaar allow me to participate.

Please take a look at my blog if you have not already! I update this frequently with reflections and pictures of my time in Senegal.

<http://amberwavestoambersands.wordpress.com/>



## Thieboudienne

The Senegalese national dish, this meal contains a mix of vegetables, fish, and white (see above) or red rice (see below). Cooking the rice in the water vegetables were prepared in gives it a wonderful flavor. The green mounds are a sauce of hibiscus leaves Occasionally dried fish (a favorite of mine) is used instead of fresh fish.



I appreciate the continue support! If you feel inclined to support YAGM financially please follow this link.

<http://support.elca.org/site/TR/Events/General?px=1047397&pg=personal&frid=1181>

As of this week I am enjoying a couple of new roles. I led my first Sunday School class last week with a few teenagers and started teaching at a primary school as well. I am teaching some six-year-olds English greetings and songs. So far, the energy level has been high and it has been a fun addition to my day.

As I process the new scenery and the shifting activities of the day my family has also been experiencing great change. I have a 2-month old host brother, who was just born before I arrived in Linguère. This has brought the family great joy, but grief is also present. My would-be host grandfather died a month before I arrived and the mourning process and visitation of family is ongoing. My host grandmother or “Maam”

has been mourning and spends large periods of time reflecting while clutching her prayer beads following each prayer during the day (there are 5 prayer times observed during the day). On my first Sunday here, I chose to spend the morning with my family and attend a ceremony marking 40 days since my host grandfather’s death. Members of the surrounding community including an imam filled the living room. Before long an Imam began leading a chant of the Qur’an. The group of approximately 50 people joined in while I closed my eyes to take in the new sounds and rhythms. After 30 minutes or so the ceremony closed and we ate a thick porridge of millet and yogurt, traditional fare for mourning, holidays, or a birth. This meal reminds me of the cycle of life that all people are subject to as years pass and bodies grow strong, grow old and then return to dust. During orientation, our group visited one of the Grand Mosques of Dakar and met with the Grand Imam there. He stressed the importance of unity among human beings as we look to the future because we all come from Adam or the earth. The words of Genesis 3 have provided me some peace recently as I reflect. The sweat and dust of Senegal can be challenging at times, but the culture and wonderful people I have been able to meet make for a wonderful place to call home this year.



Sharing meals around the bowl is an important part of Senegalese culture. My family typically eats lunch at 2:30.



“By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

– Genesis 3:19