

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My name is Hannah Potantus, and I am a new missionary with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod preparing to go to Africa to serve as an Academic Support Specialist!

Who am I? I hope to meet you all in person, but I would like to share a little about myself right off the bat. I am from Cleveland, Ohio. I am 28 years old, and I have a Master's degree in English. I was raised in the LCMS helping at my church and school for as long as I can remember. My mother is a Lutheran school teacher and helping her with her classroom while I was younger helped shape the types of jobs I had once I was older. I have always sought out ways to help others and I took that with me into job interviews from my very first job in high school at JCPenney to my latest job as a substitute teacher. Now, I am excited to be able to help our brothers and sisters in Africa!

What is an Academic Support Specialist? I like to think of my role as a helper with a background in teaching and learning. I will be helping fellow missionary families in Tanzania by homeschooling their children along with teaching writing classes in the local seminary. I will also be helping to support your learning by writing articles and stories to keep the congregations in the U.S. up to date on all the wonderful ways God is working through His people in Africa.

Why me? At heart I will always be a student. I have always loved learning and sharing with others what I had learned that day. Now I get to do just that! As a homeschool teacher I can learn alongside missionary kids exploring all the interesting ways God has made this world and the people in it. I always loved school and am excited to be back in that setting. As a writing teacher I can share my love of the written word with those who aren't as familiar with it. Writing and reading have always been passions of mine. I can't wait to share these with both the church in Tanzania as well as with all of you! Even though I grew up in the church I didn't know a lot about what was going on, especially when it came to providing missionaries. I pray that I will be able to let all of you know just

how much we do for God's people all over His world.

How did I know I wanted to be a missionary? The short answer is that I let God decide. The idea has been there since 2021 when a good friend of mine suggested a mission trip might be a good fit for me. At the same time, I had applied to graduate school. God answered my prayers about mission work with an acceptance to that small graduate program – “not yet.” It wouldn't be until the spring of 2025 when God's reply turned to “yes, now.” In the first part of 2025 my whole world shook. What I thought of as my foundation was torn away from me. Some people, who my family (my parents, my brother, and myself) thought of as extended family, turned their backs on us. Not only was I caught adrift but so was my entire immediate family. But out of the ashes of the only life I had ever known rose a miraculous reset centering my family even more on God and His Word. A part of that miracle was finding my pathway to joining the mission field, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Before I head over to Africa in January, I have the opportunity to travel and speak at churches and schools sharing with God's people what our church has accomplished in spreading God's Word and mercy throughout the nations. I want to thank you for taking the time to read this – your support means a lot! I look forward to having the opportunity to talk with you in person sometime soon! If you want to sign up for my monthly newsletter, set up a time for me to talk with you or your church, or have any questions please feel free to contact me at hannah.potantus@lcms.org.

Blessings,
Hannah Potantus
lcms.org/potantus

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” John 14:27

