



A Thanksgiving Surprise

Thanksgiving arrived early this year, five days to be precise, and I celebrated it in a way I could never have possibly anticipated and with people, a Somali Bantu refugee family of six, I never imagined I would come to know.

These travel-weary strangers arrived in Roswell, Georgia this past Friday to begin new lives.

For 10 years, they languished in poverty-stricken camps along the dangerous Somali-Kenyan border with 12,000 other refugees waiting for word that a country would accept them. Descendants of slaves taken in the late nineteenth century, the Bantu have remained a persecuted minority in Somalia and cannot return to their homes from which they fled.

Working in concert with World Relief, a refugee resettlement agency commissioned by the U.S. State Department, Roswell UMC sponsored this family by extending their homes, hands and hearts to them in Christian love. Although I can't pronounce their names, much less speak their language, we share universal dreams: freedom to work, worship, and live without fear of persecution; bright futures for our children; and food to fill our bellies.

Speaking of food, Saturday was the night my friend, Nancy Mauney, and I had volunteered to serve dinner. There was only one catch. It had to be fish, a dish neither one of us felt comfortable preparing. Once my panic subsided, I thought back to several weeks ago when my husband, Ron, and I helped Dave Bowling, a stranded motorist, push his car to safety. He manages a seafood restaurant and immediately offered us free lunch - something I never considered - until now. Well, instead of two for lunch, it turned out to be 12 for dinner, and we feasted on one of the Bantus favorite foods - fish - provided by God's very own hands.

This Thanksgiving I'm grateful for God's perfect timing, my newfound friends from a distant land and the revelation that we are to "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Diana Durie

Diana Durie is the newest member of the Information Office team. Previously, she was a freelance features writer for local, regional, and national publications. She has been published frequently by the Atlanta Magazine. With her husband, Ron, daughter, Chelsie, and son, Ronnie, she attends Roswell Church where she is involved as a leader in the prayer ministry.

Happy Thanksgiving

All of us at the United Methodist Center wish you a Happy Thanksgiving. Most offices will be closed from noon on Wednesday, November 24, until Monday, November 29.

This Week's Calendar Events

November 25 - 26

United Methodist Center Closed. Happy Thanksgiving

[Complete Calendar](#)

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Lectionary and Bible Readings

Daily Bible Reading

[Click here](#) for readings that will take you through the entire Bible in a Year.

Lectionary Scriptures NIV Sunday, November 28, 04 - 1st Sunday of Advent - Color: Purple or Blue

Scripture Readings

- [Psalm 122](#)
- [Isaiah 2: 1-5](#)
- [Romans 13: 11-14](#)
- [Matthew 24: 36-44](#)