



The Atkins Family

Jason, Emily, Savannah,
Nathaniel, and Miriam

Serving in Guinea-Bissau,
West Africa

February 2024

This month two different groups of American friends blessed us with visits!

Work Trip From Tulsa *by Jason*

This month we were delighted to receive two small teams from the U.S. The early February group was a first trip from members of The Builder's class of First United Methodist Church in Tulsa. The three guys who made the trip have been part of our ministry for more than a decade, so we were excited to host them. Between them, they've supplied us with several of the major pieces of equipment we use in our ministry including the compressed adobe block machine, my main lathe in the shop, and the Cat skid steer. They've been a big blessing over the years, so we were excited to finally be able to show them around Guinea-Bissau in person. However, when they got here all they wanted to do was work, so we kept them busy! (This was a difficult proposition for my Guinean workers to accept, because they really don't like letting older people have to do manual labor, so seeing Jim Redyke, at 81, spend all day working was something they had to get used to!)

We accomplished several milestones while they were here, and we were very thankful for their help. First, Jim R. spent the better part of their week digging dirt out of our mine with the skid steer to finish (finally!) the fill for the floor of the shop. It was a task I had been working on for months in my spare time and it seemed like it would never end. But now we're up to the level where we're ready for gravel to finish the subgrade and then we can pour the whole rest of the shop floor in chunks!

Larry Voight, who is a retired finish carpenter, happily volunteered to be pressed into service in my makeshift woodshop to produce the windows for the first guest bungalow. He might not have known what he was signing up for before seeing our chain-saw-milled hardwood, but he and Jim Ecrete produced some beautiful windows eventually! We're now one more step toward the bungalow being finished and ready for its first guests. Jim E. also was able to give some really helpful feedback on the tile floor in the bungalow (the first tile floor at the site) since that's his background. The tile we have available here varies wildly in quality, so his advice about choosing our material moving forward was great.



Jim R. spent most of the week digging dirt out of the mine and filling the shop footprint, a task I had been working on and thought would never end!



Larry and Jim E. had their hands full transforming local chainsaw-milled African Mahogany into windows for the guest bungalow but did a fabulous job!

They brought us suitcases full of helpful supplies and construction material, and even managed to bring a new cappuccino maker from Portugal, to Emily's surprise and excitement, to replace ours which has been broken for a year.

