

Back in Juba, 7 years on! In November Liz and Joel had the chance to go back to Juba and join in the 10 year anniversary celebration of Juba Christian Academy, where Joel was one of the first students back in 2014. Below are some pictures and thoughts from the visit along with our Christmas greetings.



Visiting the MAF office, now at a different location in town (view from a car window, in case you're wondering about the black line!)



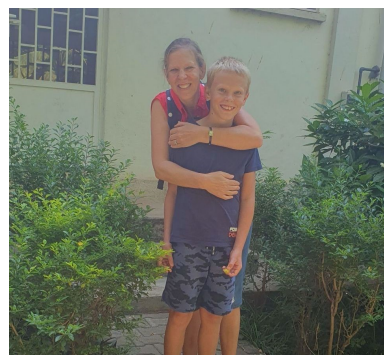
Esther and Ben once called this pre-fabricated office "school". Seven years on, it is now part of the MAF office!



Meet Grace, who worked as our house-lady from 2014-2016. I was devastated when it wasn't possible to say goodbye in the 2016 conflict and at the time I felt great concern for her safety. Our reunion, over 7 years later, was very special! Grace still works for MAF families. It was wonderful to meet her latest addition, who is the 3rd child to be born to Grace since we left Juba in 2016, making her a proud mother of 5!



This was our house in Hai Cinema- how normal it felt to be back at the place we used to call home! Yet times have moved on and several families have called this building home since we left. We treated this visit as a "goodbye" to the once-familiar house.





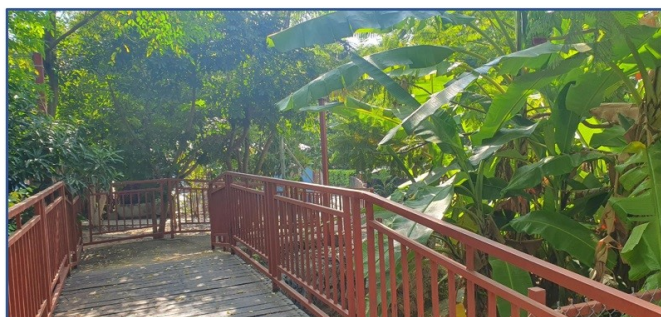
The Moringa trees which Esther, Ben and Joel planted in 2014 outside our house.



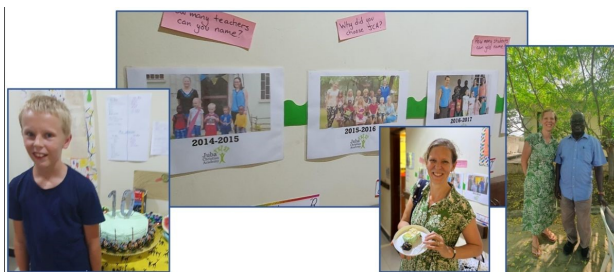
There are some changes at Hai Cinema since we left Juba. The pool is now a proper swimming pool, not an over-ground tub; the play-ground equipment is updated; the road outside is now paved and the small shacks and café situated on the adjacent street have disappeared. We also missed the familiar faces and voices of those who were once our neighbours and friends who, like us, have moved away. We took a peek at the building once used for Joel's school- the Juba Christian Academy. The school used a couple of rooms in this place, before moving across town:



Although Joel and I took a taxi cross town to visit Hai Cinema, we actually stayed at the Guesthouse at the newer MAF compound. The “new” compound, now 7 over years old, was not completed when we left Juba, so it was amazing to stay there and see how beautifully it has been built. It is bursting with life- fruit trees galore, plants and birds- and several families serving with MAF in Juba! It is a testament to God's provision and the faithfulness of God's gifted visionaries who imagined this place and worked hard to make it happen.



Juba Christian Academy- 10 years on! Ten years ago, the school began with a handful of children. When Joel joined in 2014, there were just 5 children of pre-school age. Now it is a thriving community of 20 plus students, offering classes for children of all ages up to Grade 5 (age 11).



Joel and I loved being part of JCA's 10-Year Birthday celebrations! We saw many familiar faces, including our pastor from our time in Juba, who took part in the speeches. Perhaps you can spot Joel in his 2014 and 2015/16 class? The cake was also delicious... ☺

On Sunday, Joel and I visited the church we used to attend. The building they currently use had been double-booked- but there was no worry about rain under South Sudan's sunny skies, so we met under a tree instead!



I discovered old friends, including the worship leader, who led us in beautiful praise without the help of electricity (power went off half way through a song!). It was moving to be with friends old and new, including a missionary from Aweil who had been with us during the tense moments at Quality Hotel back in 2016. "God is so faithful", he smiled, as we shook hands. I couldn't agree more.



*Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." Lamentations 3 v. 22-24*

During this Christmas season, we pray that the peace of God will rest over each of you. Thank you so much for your love, support and prayers through this year for the work of MAF, for safety for our pilots and prayers for Uganda and for our family. You are very much appreciated!



With lots of love from us all in Kampala,  
**Liz, Andrew, Esther, Ben and Joel XXXXX**