

# ATTERIDGEVILLE TIMES

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## GOODBYE CHICAGO, HELLO ~~SWAZILAND~~ SOUTH AFRICA?

Though I'm sure this year has many pearls of wisdom to bestow on me, one that has rung true many times so far is this; sometimes the best plan is to *not* have a plan.

If you've been following my journey so far, you'll know that initially I was supposed to be spending my YAGM year in the country of Swaziland. As it turns out, the visa process for many countries can be long, frustrating, and ultimately fruitless. For my Southern Africa cohort, it turned out that I was the only person to receive a visa to South Africa, meaning there was a lot of last minute reshuffling. The end result is that now you could call our program the Southern and Eastern Africa cohort! I remain the only YAGM in South Africa the country, while Louisa, Fiona, and Rachel (See photo on pg. 2) are in Swaziland. The three other members of my cohort- Patrick, Aisling, and Sean- took some **big** leaps of faith and said yes to going to Tanzania. (Cont. on pg. 3)

## How Do You Say It In Sotho?

Dumela = Hello

Dumelang = Hello to more than one person

Koko = Grandmother

Bakoko = Grandmothers

Pronunciation: SeSotho is a Bantu language, and for most Bantu and other African languages, every letter written in is pronounced!

## Music

Little Worrier by Kina Granis

Jesus Gave Me Water by Sam Cooke

A Luta Continua by Miriam Makeba

## Books

### Just Finished

The Red Tent by Anita Diamat

Ancillary Mercy by Ann Leckie

### Current

Your God is Too Small by J.B. Phillips

The Problem of Pain by C.S. Lewis

### Next

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS ATTERIDGEVILLE?

My placement site in Southern Africa is Atteridgeville, a township just west of Pretoria in the Central Province.



Meet the Southern African cohort! (L-R: Rachel Perkins, Tori Valcarcel (me), Louisa Ishida, Aisling Green, Patrick McCarthy, Fiona Carson, and Sean Bryant) PC: Alex LaChapelle



The little red pin is me for the year!

Atteridgeville is a place of many people, many languages, and many cultures. As much as people like to refer to the U.S. as the “great melting pot” of the world, I really think my new home has the States beat! While Sotho is the lingua franca, words from Zulu, Arabic, and various other languages have made their way into the Atteridgeville dialect. This mixing, while a beautifully confusing thing for someone trying to learn Sotho, does not come from beautiful beginnings. Like other townships in South Africa, Atteridgeville is a living reminder of apartheid rule. Under apartheid, black (and colored) South Africans were forcibly removed from their family homes and displaced to townships and “homelands”. Townships were often cramped and lacking in basic services. While many townships are moving forward from their complicated pasts (Atteridgeville claims the title for “Cleanest Township in South Africa”), it is impossible, and perhaps not right, to forget what South Africa went through in the not so distant past to come to a better (not perfect) present.

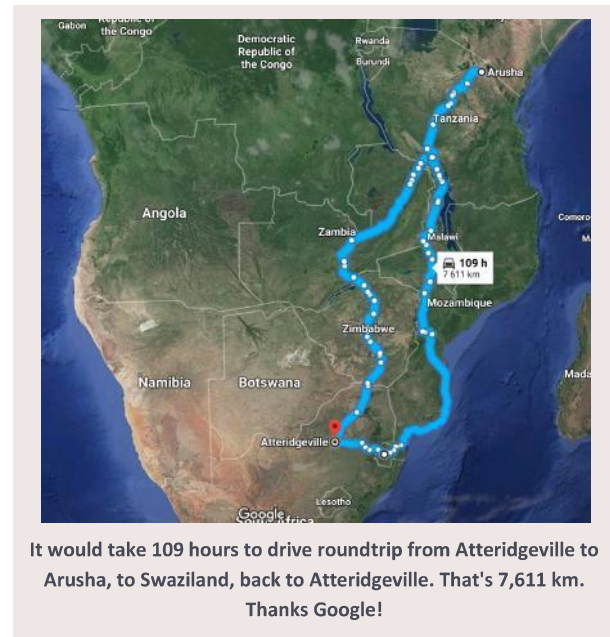
**The entire 2018-2019 YAGM Cohort on the steps of LSTC, where we had Orientation from August 14-21<sup>st</sup>! These 76 young adults are now in countries around the world; Argentina and Uruguay, Australia, Cambodia, Central Europe, Jerusalem/West Bank, Madagascar, Mexico, Rwanda, Senegal, and Southern Africa (PC: Will Nunnaly, ELCA)**





Luckily the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has great relationships with our partner church in Tanzania, which is coincidentally one of the fastest growing populations of Lutherans around the world! The Lutheran Church in Tanzania graciously accommodated our three young adults, and as I type, they are working to settle them into new sites.

What all this means is that I am the lone wolf here in South Africa (cue lonely wolf howling). It's been a disappointment for many of us in many ways to know that there are 6 other sites around SA that won't be receiving YAGM this year, and of course this throws much more uncertainty into the future of the Southern Africa program in terms of acquiring visas for the coming years. Although it will undoubtedly be hard to stay in touch when we are so far apart most of the year, I have faith in my unbelievably resilient cohort members.



One of the many positive outcomes from this change in plans is that now I might be visiting my cohort in both Tanzania and Swaziland! While I continue to learn and love Atteridgeville and South Africa, Rachel, Louisa, Fiona, Patrick, Aisling, and Sean, will be doing the same across Southern and Eastern Africa.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **Matthew 6: 25-34**

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RUNNING LATE

It was my very first day at work. My host father, Paul, is a lovely man who walked with me the first few days from our house to the church where I work (and where we attend Sunday services), the J.S. Mminel Diaconate Center. Paul does not like to be late for anything, much less delivering his host daughter to her first day at work, so we walked briskly in order to get there in time. Just 2 minutes till my time to report we walked in and said our hellos to everyone.

I headed into the church after thanking Paul, thinking that would be the best place to go (the center has many different buildings, and the church is the most centrally located). Unknowingly, I had walked into the morning exercise session of the MAR KHOSA Senior Citizens Club, one of the ministries of the church!

About 25 minutes and what felt like 100 different stretches later, I turned around to see Ntate (father) Makwela standing at the church doors waving me over. It turns out the administration team had been waiting for me in the office building those 20 minutes, worrying that I was late, and even calling Paul, who confirmed that I had been dropped off! While I was mortified I had already messed up on day one, my supervisors reassured me that it was all for the best. I was given a choice to start working with one of the three active ministries of the church for my first few months, and because of that morning exercise I felt already bonded with the bakoko, so I'm working with them now.

Long story short- Being late on your first day can be a good thing!

# PICTURES



Sunset over Pietermaritzburg during our in-country orientation.



Katie Evans and yours truly at the Bean in Chicago. Katie is in Jerusalem/West Bank right now for her YAGM year!



Enjoying the nightlife of Johannesburg (by reading a book on our hostel porch).

**Want to hear more about the books I'm reading or the songs I'm listening to? Want to hear more stories from my time in Atteridgeville, or just want to chat?**

Send me an email at [toriyagmsa@gmail.com](mailto:toriyagmsa@gmail.com) or drop by my blog at [www.toriinsouthafrica.wordpress.com](http://www.toriinsouthafrica.wordpress.com). You can sign up for updates for my blog or let me know if you want to get these newsletters when they come out!



May the Peace of Christ Go With You  
and  
Thabelang (Be Happy!)  
-Tori-



Thanks to Sean Bryant for the bible verse!