



The PAACS Bulletin

Monthly Newsletter • Issue 260 • March 2026



MISSION

PAACS' mission is to glorify God by training and discipling African surgeons and related specialists to become Christ-like leaders and servants providing excellent and compassionate care to those most in need.

VISION

PAACS envisions a growing number of African surgeons and related specialists living out the Gospel and ministering to the sick.

IN THIS ISSUE

- From the Desk of the CEO
- PAACS 12th Annual Junior Boot Camp
- Junior Boot Camp: Hope of His Calling
- Junior Boot Camp Highlights: Faith & Fellowship
- Kibuye Hope Hospital White Coat Ceremony
- Advancing Cardiothoracic Surgical Training in Africa
- Short-Term Mission Trip to Ethiopia
- Short-Term Mission Trip to Togo
- PAACS News
 - New Store Front
 - Big Daddy Weave Concert
- Prayer Requests/Praises
- Articles on Surgery



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

Dear PAACS Family,

As Easter approaches, I often reflect on Jesus' final words on the cross: "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Even in that sacred moment, His trust in the Father was unwavering. Just three days later, that trust was revealed in the fullness of victory through the resurrection. Because Christ rose from the grave, we rejoice with confidence. We know that the Father's hands are faithful, holding every part of our lives, our work, and this ministry with perfect care.

In early March, I had the privilege of attending the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) Junior Boot Camp (JBC) at Brackenhurst Conference Centre in Kenya. This year, we had 46 residents attending overall. It was a joy to share the heart of this ministry with these residents and witness their excitement for what lies ahead. Each day combined spiritual and clinical training, including time in God's Word and worship, lectures, and hands-on learning. Through teaching, fellowship, and encouragement, the residents grew not only in skill but also in faith. It was inspiring to watch them progress during the course of the JBC, knowing they are preparing to serve patients and communities across Africa with compassion and Christ-centered care.

Prior to attending the Junior Boot Camp, I spent time in Tanzania visiting Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre (ALMC) and Selian Lutheran Hospital. There, I met with residents, faculty, and hospital leadership and had the opportunity to listen, learn, and gain a deeper understanding of their work, vision, and daily realities. I also met with Stella Itungu, Chief Executive Officer of the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA), and was encouraged to see the commitment to strengthening surgical and related specialty care across the region. These visits overall were meaningful opportunities for me to observe, engage deeply, share the work of PAACS, and pray with our residents, faculty, and partners. My time in Tanzania with these partner hospitals and COSECSA was profoundly impactful and a true blessing.



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO



Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

We are honored to share that PAACS was recently named Project of the Year by the Mobilizing Medicine & Missions (M3) Conference. This recognition reflects the impact of training and discipling surgeons and related specialists. During the event, Dr. Keir Thelander, Executive Vice President, spoke about PAACS' unique model of spiritual discipleship with surgical training and invited others to invest in equipping the next generation of compassionate, skilled surgeons and related specialists.

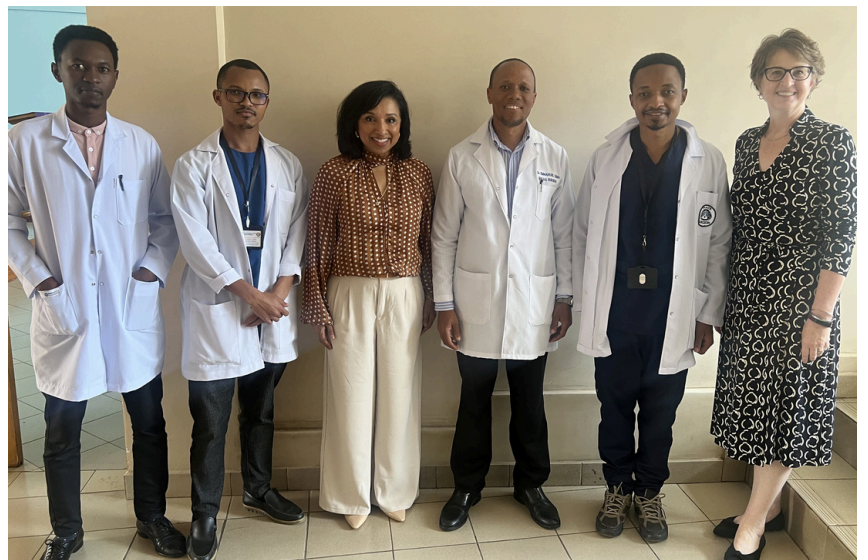
On March 23, there were over 60 participants from our worldwide community who joined together for the PAACS Global Day of Fasting and Prayer. It was a special time to pause, seek the Lord, and praise Him for His continued faithfulness. Moments like these are good reminders that this work is not ours alone. We place it, again and again, fully into His hands.

This Easter season, we are reminded that there is no safer place to be than in the hands of the One who has overcome death. Thank you for your continued prayers and partnership. It means more than you know.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan A. Koshy".

Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer





PAACS 12TH ANNUAL JUNIOR BOOT CAMP

**Keir Thelander, MD, FACS, FWACS, FCS (ECSA)
Executive Vice President**

March 1 began two weeks of intense learning and teaching for the 41 PAACS first-year trainees and 5 second-years from other training programs. Relationship building began, which will lead to a network of PAACS residents and eventual graduates for mutual encouragement, spiritual growth, and academic advancement. Basic Surgical Skills training remained a foundation of the schedule while adding Basic Life Support, coordinated by colleagues from the CAAP (Christian Academy of African Physicians) program, and was complemented by the robust POCUS (Point-of-care ultrasound training) led by PAACS Nkinga Program Director, Dr. Wendy Willmore.

Pastors Ed, Robert, and Bill taught daily from the Gospel of John, "...the Word became flesh and lived among us!" Orthopaedic training, trauma care, research principles, specialty skills workshops (head and neck exam, intubation, endoscopy, burr holes, among others), Surgical Critical Care, Anesthesiology, and Pediatric Surgery rounded out the academic program. Each evening, all gathered to hear from another part of the PAACS family, a program elsewhere on the continent. Long-term PAACS faculty members gathered each morning to discuss the spiritual teaching, pray for one another's programs, and receive faculty development on a myriad of high-impact topics.

With over 120 people passing through the gates of Brackenhurst during these two weeks, much was learned, relationships deepened, laughs abounded (including a skit from the PAACS EVP and Tenwek GS program director), and we trust more than anything that God was glorified through the uniting of God's people from across the continent. If you attended, "Thank You" for investing. If you did not attend, we will be gathering again next year from February 28-March 11. Come Join Us!!!





JUNIOR BOOT CAMP: HOPE OF HIS CALLING

Christopher Moir, MD
Academic Dean

Classic superheroes hide their true identities until called into action. Then they shed their disguise of ordinariness and leap into save the world.

At PAACS it's a bit different. Yes, new residents will also uncover an identity that saves lives...but this is no fiction. They will truly heal where others cannot. They will go where despair is no comic book character. And they will fight, not with closed fists, but with open hands of compassion.

Does that mean our movie theater champions can be found conquering in today's operating theater? No, again. Look instead to those at the bedside in the predawn stillness, to the long dark hours of care, and to those on their knees. They're not crushing superhero landings, but in prayer for the ones they're called to serve.

Each year, new PAACS residents come to Boot Camp to step over a threshold into the ancient art of healing. There, they discover both mystery and certainty in what has become a very modern form of excellence. They will become surgeons. Heroes, perhaps... but the identity we train has already been chosen.

The hands of a PAACS surgeon may hold a scalpel, but the heart reaches for the infinite. It's there that souls reside. There is the truest identity. There, before time, before learning, before healing, they, and all of us, were chosen. And there, in the fullness of time to come, we know the boundless greatness of His power and the hope of His calling.

In PAACS, residents don't learn to hide their superpower but to live it. They learn to work out their calling and to understand where their rare abilities come from. The path will be hard, sometimes disappointing, always demanding. But as disciples rather than mere students, it's the path to extraordinary skill, strength, courage, compassion, and wisdom. That is real power.

Welcome, first-year residents.

We can't give you a cape...but you will learn adventure.



JUNIOR BOOT CAMP HIGHLIGHTS: FAITH & FELLOWSHIP



Ed Scarse, DMin, ThM
Spiritual Dean

The JBC was a wonderful time of learning and fellowship as junior residents and faculty gathered once again at the Brackenhurst Conference Center.

I was pleased to be joined by Pastor Bill Curtis, lead pastor at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Darlington SC, and Pastor Robert Yanduya, PAACS Associate Spiritual Dean. It was a meaningful time of worship in God's Word from the Gospel of John.



One of the highlights of the Junior Boot Camp is the time that faculty have to meet together. Each morning after worship they gather with the Spiritual Dean for a time of reflection from the Scripture studied during the worship hour and reporting what is going on at their PAACS location. Each faculty member has an opportunity to share, in a safe setting, details about their particular PAACS program. Then the other faculty gather around them to pray for their specific prayer requests. It is always a wonderful time of fellowship and encouragement. Being a PAACS Program Director, APD, or faculty member is a very challenging position. Praise be to God for the strength He provides.



ADVANCING CARDIOTHORACIC SURGICAL TRAINING IN AFRICA



Arega Fekadu, M.D.
Faculty, Cardiothoracic Surgery
Tenwek Hospital

We are delighted to welcome this year's first-year fellows to our Cardiothoracic Surgery Training Program under the Pan African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS). This year's cohort brings together talented young doctors from Malawi and Ethiopia, reflecting the program's growing impact across the African continent.

Dr. Rumbidzai Kaduwa Mlewah is a Malawian doctor whose journey is marked by resilience and purpose. After losing both parents at a young age, she was raised by extended family and went on to pursue medicine at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences. Her early life experiences shaped her determination to serve vulnerable communities.



Her passion for cardiothoracic surgery was sparked during medical school after witnessing a child with a treatable heart condition lose their life due to lack of access to care. This moment defined her career path and commitment to improving cardiac services in her country.

After completing her general surgery training through the PAACS program, she began cardiothoracic training at Tenwek. She hopes to establish sustainable cardiac care services in Malawi and train future surgeons to continue this vital work.



Dr. Siyasebow Mammo is a dedicated surgeon from Ethiopia with a strong passion for cardiothoracic care. He began his medical journey at Hawassa University, graduating with distinction, and later completed his residency in general surgery at the University of Gondar. His early experiences working in underserved communities shaped his commitment to improving access to specialized surgical care.

In his practice, Dr. Mammo witnessed major gaps in cardiothoracic care, with many patients lacking access to life-saving treatment. This inspired him to pursue advanced training through the PAACS program, where he continues to grow professionally and spiritually, with a vision to expand cardiac care and train future surgeons in Ethiopia.

ADVANCING CARDIOTHORACIC SURGICAL TRAINING IN AFRICA (CONT'D)

Dr. Lily Deneke Lemessa is a general surgeon from Ethiopia with a growing focus on cardiothoracic surgery. She studied medicine at Jimma University Medical Center and completed her surgical residency at St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College in Addis Ababa.



Her training exposed her to a high burden of surgical disease and limited access to specialized care. Her passion for cardiothoracic surgery is both personal and professional, shaped by the loss of her father to heart disease and her experience caring for patients unable to access needed cardiac surgery.

Motivated to help address the shortage of cardiothoracic surgeons, especially women in Africa, she is now part of the PAACS program, where she continues to grow in skill and faith, with hopes of serving across Africa and specializing in congenital cardiac surgery.

White Coat Ceremony: A Call to Serve with Excellence and Humility

This month, we marked a deeply meaningful milestone at the AGC Tenwek Cardiothoracic Centre as we conducted the White Coat Ceremony for our Cardiothoracic Fellowship under the Pan African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) program.

The evening was a truly remarkable occasion, celebrating not only the academic journey of our first-year fellows but also the values that define our calling in healthcare. While the donning of the white coat is a universally recognized symbol of entry into the medical profession, this ceremony carried a deeper significance, one rooted in service, humility, and purpose.

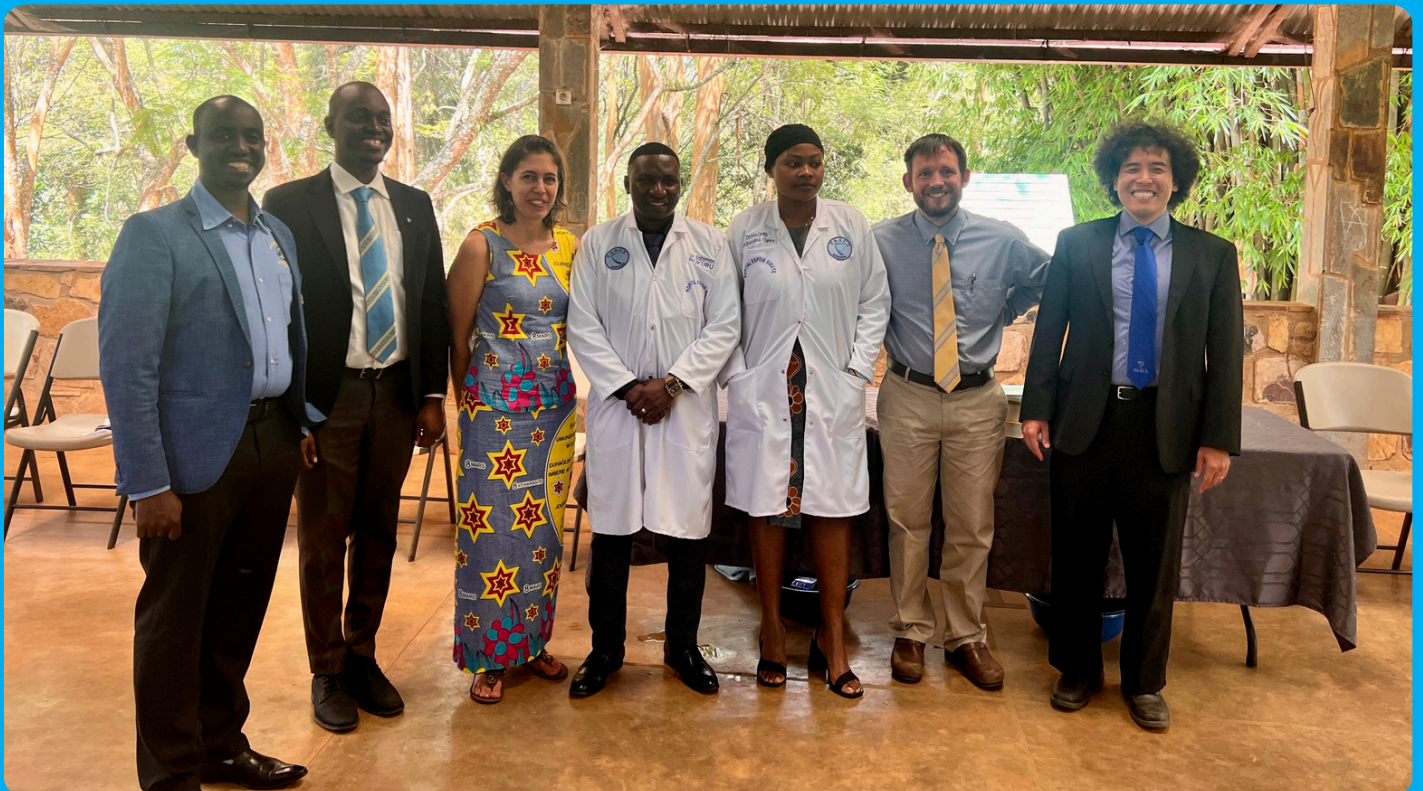




KIBUYE HOPE HOSPITAL WHITE COAT CEREMONY

Ted John, MD
Program Director, General Surgery
Kibuye Hope Hospital

Kibuye Hope Hospital had its annual White Coat Ceremony on February 21, 2026, for its two new general surgery residents, Dr. Salomon Bukuru and Dr. Clarice Maombi Kashabira. Current faculty and residents gathered for the presentation of their new white coats and foot-washing ceremony. Dr. Clarice is the first Congolese resident to enter the Kibuye program, highlighting Kibuye's commitment to training new surgeons for the region.



SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIP TO ETHIOPIA



Elizabeth Drum MD, FAAP, FCPP, FASA
Secretary
Board of Directors

In March 2026, I had the pleasure of visiting Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where I joined colleagues to coach, mentor, and work alongside pediatric anesthesiologists. With only seven pediatric anesthesiologists serving a population of more than 130 million people, the need is tremendous. Encouragingly, a brand-new fellowship program has recently begun and is already training two fellows.



During my visit, I spent time with Dr. Tim Nunn, Program Director of Orthopaedic Surgery for the Soddo/CURE-Ethiopia program, and Dr. Dawit Beyore, a fourth-year PAACS orthopedic resident in the Soddo/CURE program. I have had a 17-year relationship with CURE Ethiopia and was grateful to reconnect with many longtime colleagues and friends. The hospital is currently undergoing a major expansion that will add additional operating rooms, along with expanded ward and clinic space, increasing its capacity to serve children and families in need.



SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIP TO TOGO

Scott Pittman, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Colon & Rectal Surgeon

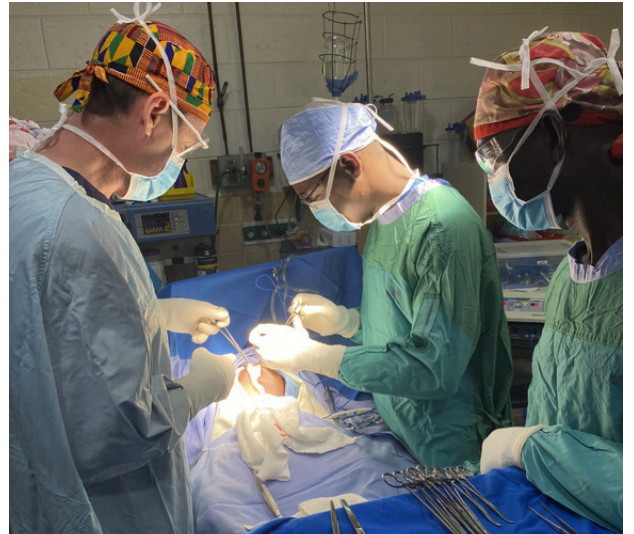


In late February and early March, I spent two weeks in Togo, visiting Hospital Baptiste Biblique (HBB) and Hospital of Hope (HoH) as a short-term missionary. During this time, I traveled between the two sites, met with residents, related specialists, and staff, toured the facilities, and engaged in the clinical, academic, and spiritual life of the program at HBB. I also conducted individual interviews with each resident, separate from staff, and spoke with lead surgeons at both locations.

This is a two-site training program in Togo, with residents in their first, second, and third years of training. Hospital of Hope (HoH) in the north is staffed by two attending surgeons, while Hospital Baptiste Biblique (HBB) in the south has three attending surgeons, with another surgeon currently on furlough. The program is strong and continues to exceed expectations in many areas. The curriculum meets established standards, incorporating both PAACS and COSECSA academic frameworks. Residents receive frequent evaluations, participate in daily teaching rounds, and gain progressive responsibility in surgical care with consistent supervision.

A notable strength is the emphasis on spiritual formation. Residents are engaged in discipleship, connected to local churches, and describe a supportive environment. Faculty are consistently described as humble, accessible, and invested in resident and related specialist success.

Looking ahead, both sites are planning for growth, including expanded facilities at HBB and additional specialists to support the work at HoH. It was a blessing to witness the mighty work of God at these sites and to share in fellowship with these dedicated teams.



PAACS NEWS

NEW PAACS STORE

[Click here to easily shop our store for PAACS-branded items.](#)

[Print Your Cause](#) – featuring 30th anniversary apparel and scrubs.

[Queensboro](#) – offering a wide range of apparel and accessories across various price points.

[Lands' End](#) - providing premium business-casual styles and accessories.



Held by His Hands

A Night of Worship and Celebration
to Raise Support for the Work of the
Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons

Celebrating 30 years of God's faithful hands at work through the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS). Join us for an evening supporting the training and discipleship of African Christian surgeons and related specialists serving the sick and the poor.

Save the Date

20
June

New Hope Christian Church
5780 S. Main St.
Whitestown, IN 46075

VIP Dinner: 5:00 PM
Concert: 6:30 PM

REGISTER



Invite friends who would be interested in supporting PAACS' mission to join you.
<https://paacs.net/concert-rsvp.html>



featuring
Big Daddy Weave

PRAYER & PRAISE

- Pray for God's favor over all PAACS training programs, that they will glorify God and be used to impact Africa for His Kingdom.
- Pray that all the new residents will be blessed with God's favor and grace.
- Pray for God's wisdom and guidance for the Board of Directors, leadership, and administrative staff as they prepare for the Spring Conference.
- Pray for blessings on all PAACS partnering organizations, supporters, and prayer warriors.

Each month, we pray for residents by name. Please join us this month by covering these residents in prayer:

- Faith Akinyi Ondago
- Brillant Gael Gahimbare
- Brenda Laureen
- Jane Kiplagat
- George Waiyaki Karanja
- Ian Mutai
- Daniel Baraka
- Nelson Kipkoros Tarus
- Jean Baptiste Ndayishimiye
- Linda Thure
- Faith Wanjiru Gachie
- Wanyonyi Ignatius
- Naomi Sigilai
- Isaie Twahirwa
- Sama Akanyun
- John Gusa
- Abraham Tiruneh
- Lughano Kalongolera
- Lily Deneke Lemessa
- Rumbidzai Kaduwa Mlewah
- Siyasebow Mammo Nademo



ARTICLES ON SURGERY, OB/GYN, AND ANESTHESIA

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- [Why surgeons need the Sabbath](#)
- [Global Surgery as an emerging discipline: Why it thrives despite barriers—And what must happen next](#)
- [**Hip Arthroscopy in Africa: A preliminary survey exploring the experiences and beliefs of Orthopaedic Surgeons in the emerging markets \(MEAFT region\)**](#)
- [Traditional face-to-face versus distance learning of local anesthesia injection technique by novice learners](#)
- [**A Scoping Review of the Prevalence of Preeclampsia and its Contributions to Maternal and Perinatal Mortality in Nigeria**](#)
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- [**Prevalence of preoperative hypertension and its associated factors among patients undergoing surgery in sub-Saharan Africa**](#)
- [The unseen complication: Relationship strain in surgical practice](#)
- [Beyond the scalpel: Supporting healthy romantic relationships in surgical life](#)
- [Teaching residents in the operating room: What driving lessons taught me about surgical judgment](#)
- [Pain, Policy and the Opioid Dilemma in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review of Access, Regulation, and Health Governance from 1990 to 2024](#)

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CONNECT

