

Matzke Mission

Serving the Solomon Islands



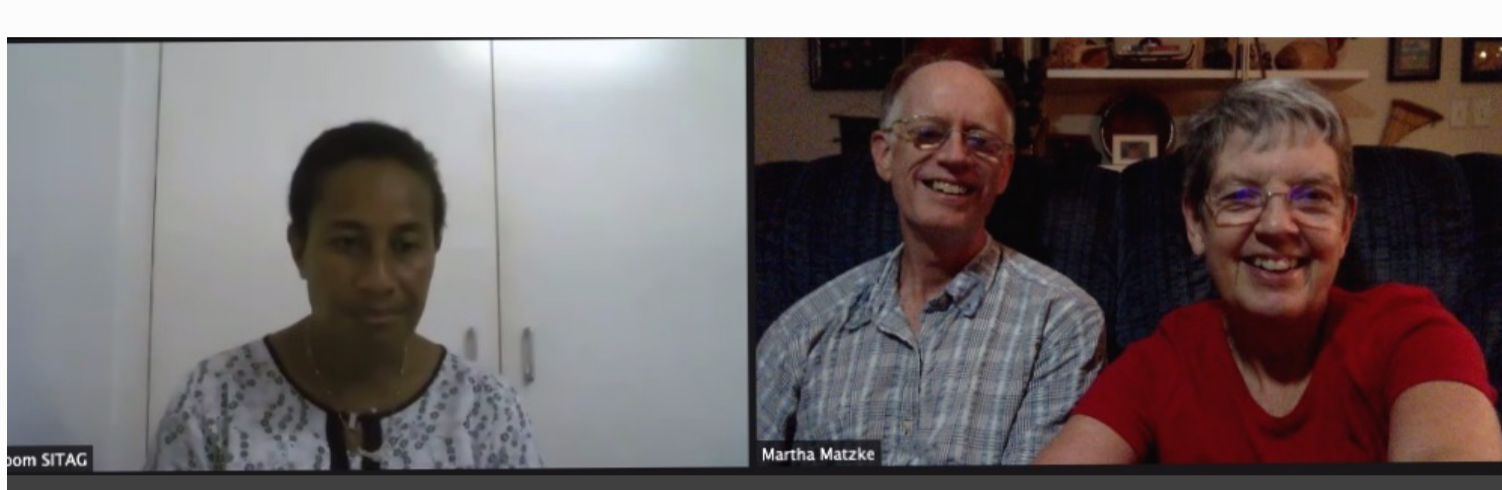
January 2021

On December 21st, while waiting to see the 'Christmas Star' (conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn) at a local state park we were blessed to see this beautiful sunset.

Looking Back - 2020 Vision

As 2020 came to a close, we were thankful that we had chosen to wait until 2021 to try to return to the Solomons. The past few months have been productive in a number of areas and it's clear that we would not have been able to return to the Solomon Islands anyway.

- Martha audited a course on Multilingual Education and Tim sat in on the classes as well. In the future, we may have opportunity to assist in teaching a similar course at the Solomon Islands National University. So we are thankful for the opportunity to take the course.
- We both worked on the development of a Solomon Islands Orientation Course curriculum. Two new families are ready to go to the Solomons and we will be helping to coordinate their orientation when they arrive. In the meantime, we are looking at ways we can do some orientation via Zoom here in the USA.
- Through Zoom, we have had meetings with Margaret, our Solomon Islands colleague regarding the multilingual education initiative.
- Tim has been working on projects around the house in preparation for renting while we are back overseas.



It's been great to be able to connect with the Solomon Islands via Zoom. We have enjoyed talking with our friend, Margaret, about the multilingual education initiative.

Covid in the Solomons?

The Solomon Islands is no longer on the list of 'Covid-free' countries. Unfortunately, a few Solomon Islanders who have returned to the country brought the virus with them. Fortunately, it was caught while they were in quarantine, which has left the general public virus-free. It's no surprise that the Solomon Islands Government is working hard to keep the virus out of the country.

So, when are you returning to the Solomon Islands?

Good question! We just found out that we have been approved for travel into the Solomon Islands by the Prime Minister's office! This is the first 'hurdle' we needed to jump over in the steps toward returning to the Solomons.

As the borders to the Solomon Islands are still 'closed', there are no regularly scheduled flights into the country. The Solomon Islands Government has been arranging 'repatriation flights' for their citizens and we have been given permission to travel on one of those flights. Our travel plans will also require permission to transit through a connecting country.

At the moment there are no repatriation flights to which we can connect. One flight is scheduled for February 7th from Auckland, New Zealand, but it is not possible to make a connection from North America. The Solomon Islands Embassy in New York has requested the flight be moved to February 8th which would allow people from North America to connect. If we aren't able to travel on that flight, we are not sure when the next repatriation flight will be scheduled.

While we are very excited about the possibility to return soon, our heads are spinning as we think through all that needs to prepare to try and leave the country in about a month!

To Do List

- prepare our house for rental
- make arrangements for a rental agent
- purchase tickets to Auckland
- purchase tickets into Honiara
- apply to transit through New Zealand
- pack/store our USA belongings
- pack our bags
- 3 negative Covid tests before departure!
- say good-byes

Quarantine

It's about this time of year in North America that people start dreaming of being on vacation in a warm climate. Swaying palm trees, tropical breezes and warm temperatures, staying in a hotel...

We expect to soon be experiencing that - but we will not be permitted to leave our hotel room! Upon arrival in the Solomon Islands, we will be required to quarantine for 21 days in a government-sanctioned hotel at our own expense. This is not the holiday of our dreams, but a necessary step in order for us to return to the Solomons. If our plane-load of passengers is all Covid-free at the end of the 21 days, we expect to be able to move back into our home in the capital city.



Tim received a special gift in December - a hammered dulcimer given to him by our new friends, Pinkie and Barbara Williams! It's been fun for Tim to begin to learn to play this beautiful instrument and we are blessed to have special new friends. We are hoping to take the dulcimer back to the Solomons with us.

We are thankful for the gift of friends and supporters who stand with us through these uncertain times!

With grateful hearts,

Tim & Martha Matzke



Matzke Mission Support

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PO Box 628200
Orlando, FL 32862-8200

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email:
tim@matzkemission.com
martha@matzkemission.com

phone numbers:
Tim (469) 409-9010
Martha (469) 409-9011

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