

## Bringing Grateful Smiles

by Luanne Skrenes

In August, 2012 the dental clinic established by the Northern Great Lakes Synod in Tanzania completed its first stage of ministry. Funding from people of the NGLS made this possible.

This effort began about two years earlier when I had dinner with Amos Wakilasa, chair of the medical ministry of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Together we planned this exciting work.



On a beautiful winter day in Dar es Salaam (80 degrees and sunny) the clinic opened, staffed by dentists Jim Hayward and Mike Orhanen, with Martha Hayward and Ardith Frisk assisting. Hayward is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Negaunee, Michigan. Orhanen is a member of Messiah Lutheran Church, Marquette, Michigan.

A dedication service with Diocesan Bishop Alex Malasusa and NGLS Bishop Thomas Skrenes celebrated and gave thanks to God for this clinic and its work.

This ministry is an example of full Christian partnership: the synod supplied dentists, equipment and dental supplies; the United Evangelical Mission (German churches) provided the building; and the Tanzanians helped make it happen. God is at work.

Our synod dentists brought modern care to the poorest of the poor in Dar es Salaam.

Most of the people of this area have never seen a dentist. Many had major dental work done. One had nine teeth pulled! A woman with significant dental problems found relief, and even with a very numb mouth told us “*Asanti sana*” (deep thanks). Children – some Christian, others Muslim – are smiling today because their teeth were repaired. This has been a good effort. Thanks be to God!

The clinic will continue, thanks to the equipment purchased by our synod’s members. Two trained Tanzanian technicians will serve using the drills and chairs, compressors and equipment that our synod contributed to the clinic, now owned by the Lutheran Diocese. Much work can and will be done in the days and months ahead.

Planning continues for future dental mission trips to Tanzania from our synod. We are in prayer for this work. Your prayers and financial gifts are appreciated. As our brothers and sisters in Tanzania say, “*Bwana Asifiwe!*” (Praise the Lord!).



