

## Renewing Relationships and Making New Friends in Tanzania

*by Pastor Jim Duehring, Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission.*

I was privileged to accompany Dr. Danielle Anderson, Rev. Brahm Semmler Smith, and Stephanie Smith (no relationship to Pastor Brahm) on a visit to our companion diocese in Tanzania—the Eastern and Coastal Diocese. This past October, we spent about two weeks in Tanzania renewing relationships and making new friends. We saw many of the ministries of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese.

The Northern Great Lakes Synod has an over 30-year companionship relationship with the Eastern and Coastal Diocese which is part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Many people from our synod have traveled to Tanzania in various capacities—work crews, teacher exchanges, church companionship. The ELCT is now larger than the ELCA in membership. The church is growing in Tanzania, but is not without its own challenges. We have much to learn from each other.

Hospitality is probably the first word that comes to mind when thinking of our experience in Tanzania. We were well-cared for and were welcomed to witness their lives. We were welcomed in the name of Christ. We experienced great music and worship and passion for their faith and tangible efforts to serve others in Jesus' name.

I offer in this article some highlights along with pictures of this experience in Tanzania. If your congregation already has a companion congregation in Tanzania, I encourage you to keep that relationship up through regular correspondence. And, you may even choose to visit Tanzania or host visitors from Tanzania! If you don't have a companion congregation in Tanzania, please contact me in the synod office to learn more about the possibilities!

### **Kisarawe Lutheran Jr. Seminary—A Boarding School for Teenagers**



Headmaster Maxon is a young man who is passionate to make improvements both in the infrastructure and the quality of instruction. They strive to offer physical, mental and spiritual growth for all students. Mr Maxon gave us a strategic plan for improvements. He showed me pictures of how over the years our synod has supported this place through work crews. The library is named after former Bishop Skogman, one dormitory named after

former Bishop Skrenes, and one dormitory named after Rev. Bob Langseth. We also were blessed to witness and participate in graduation ceremonies. The pride of the students and families was on display!

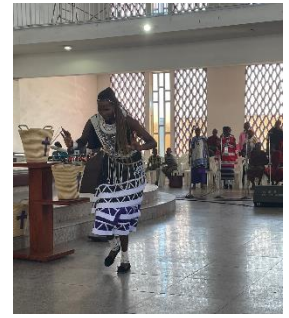


A picture of Pastor Bob Langseth and his wife Deloris stands in the library which he and many others from the Northern Great Lakes Synod help build. The headmaster of Kisarawe offered condolences as Pastor Langseth's funeral was ironically the same day as my visit. Pastor Langseth was affectionately known by many in Tanzania as "Pastor Tembo" (Swahili word for "elephant"—a nod to his booming voice and playful portrayal of an elephant)

### A Maasai Worship Service



The Maasai are the traditional hunters and herders of Tanzania. Some of them are moving from rural areas to the capital city of Dar es Salaam. The Lutheran church is helping with literacy training. We celebrated the “graduates” of that training! We experienced traditional Masai dancing and music during the worship service!



### A Growing Church



I was honored to preach and be with Bishop Malasusa and the people of Gide parish. The 4 hour celebration included many choirs, brass band, prayers and offerings. Even a goat was presented to Bishop Malasusa. God bless the Gide parish and Pastor Elisabeth as they complete their roof!!



### Interfaith and Peace Efforts on Zanzibar



The Lutheran Church is small in numbers on the island of Zanzibar, but it's Upendo House and Interfaith peace efforts include a vocational training school for girls to learn sewing and business skills. Most of the students are Muslim.



### Mtoni Health Dispensary, Maternity and Dental Clinic



The Eastern and Coastal Diocese supports medical facilities like that at Mtoni. This health dispensary provides basic medical care. There is also a new maternity ward. The dental clinic welcomed a new modern dental chair, and there are hopes for a sustainable model of dental care for people who often don't have a chance to receive dental care.



### Mkuza Girls School



Mkuza is a boarding school for girls sponsored by the Eastern and Coastal Diocese with a current enrollment of about 200. Plans are to expand to 400. The Women of the Northern Great Lakes Synod have a long history of supporting Mkuza. The headmistress, Mercy Nyka, gave us a tour and thanked us for our support.



### Mlandizi Vocational Center for Adults



The diocese has built a vocational training center for adults with special needs. Carolina Shedafa showed us this amazing facility that should open in January. Adults will be housed here and learn a skill that matches their abilities and offers them a sense of dignity. Endowment Funds from the Skrenes Ministry Fund have helped this effort.



Bishop Alex Malasusa is a longtime friend of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. We were pleased to spend some 90 minutes in his office. Bishop Malasusa was elected as bishop of the whole Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Bishop Katherine Finegan will attend his installation in Tanzania on January 21.

May God bless Bishop Malasusa and all our friends in the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of Tanzania!

Bwana Asifiwe! Praise the Lord!

