
Konde Partnership Newsletter

A publication of the Konde Diocese Committee of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

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KONDE BISHOP VISITS TRINITY, LEBANON

Joette and Richard Holinger
LSS, Trinity, Lebanon

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Lebanon, hosted Bishop Israel-Peter Mwakyolile on Sunday, June 14th at their 8:00a.m. and 10:45 am worship services.

During the Sunday School Hour, the Bishop addressed the combined Sunday School classes in the church social room, where he was treated to songs by the kindergarten and primary Departments.



Miranda Hollinger presenting a scrapbook to the Bishop

A scrapbook was presented to the Bishop containing letters and pictures showing the interest of the children and their relationship with God. The scrapbook also contained recordings of the songs that were sung to the Bishop.

The Bishop was the guest of the church at a luncheon with the Konde Committee of Holy Trinity and the Church council members.

Holy Trinity is supporting the Konde Diocese by providing the yearly salaries for five pastors. The Konde Committee of the church is also involved in initiatives to support the Itete Lutheran Hospital and the Mannow Secondary School.

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The following two articles refer to the same event, a trip to Germany sponsored by the Munich-West churches by a Konde Diocese delegation. The editor included both to give the readers a glimpse of how both sides viewed the trip.

KONDE PARTNERS VISIT MUNICH

Ruth Schubert
Munich-West

The churches of Munich-West hosted Pastor Erasto Mwaipopo and five other visitors from the Konde Diocese from June 24th to July 15th. The partnership between Munich-West and Konde Diocese is primarily a partnership between congregations.

This year Munich-West asked the Konde Diocese to send someone from five of the companion congregations, three of them being cases where there has been no personal contact up to now. The guests lived with host families who agree that this was an enriching experience for them. At least two members from

the partner congregations in Munich are now very interested in travelling to Mbeya, and maybe they will be able to do so next year.

Pastor Erasto Mwaipopo, who is an indispensable help in communication with the partners, led the group.

One of the visit themes was poverty and social services in Munich.

The Tanzanian visitors were interested in the bicycle recycling shop that was shown them, and they happily purchased items at a very cheap second-hand clothes store for disadvantaged families, but – not surprisingly – the German hosts were unable to convince them that poverty is a relative concept: everyone here is rich in their eyes, even those who are dependent on government support. This teaches that outside Christians should not be so quick to see people in Tanzania as poor, just because their children run around barefoot. It is not as simple as that.

Three days were spent in the partner congregations, trying to establish similarities and differences in parish work. One important difference is that in Konde there is more home visiting and personal contact with parish members than in Munich, where it is difficult in the urban context to sustain personal relations with thousands of church members who may only

show up at Christmas or on family occasions such as weddings. But the church's work can be summed up in the words of the Bible: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in everyone." (1 Corinthians 12: 4-6).

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**KONDE VISITORS
HOSTED BY
MUNICH-WEST**

Pastor Erasto Mwaipopo
Konde

Partners of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Munich West of Germany invited their partnership member parishes from Konde Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania to visit Germany. This visit lasted three weeks beginning from 24th June to 15th July 2009.

People invited from Tanzania came from the following Parishes; from Mbeya Mjini Parish, Mrs. Merina Masawa, from Sinai Parish Ms. Nancy Mtera, from Ruanda Parish, Mr. Asheri Mwasandube, from Mpata Parish Mrs. Beatrice Nachibona Mwaisango and from Manow Parish Mrs Sipora Mwamakunge. Rev. Erasto Mwaipopo partnership secretary, was the leader of the deligation.

This visit follows a week after the other deligation of three people were invited to attend the

Synod Assembly of the LSS in the USA this year. These people are the Bishop, Rev. Dr. Israel Peter Mwakyolile, the Dean Rev. Edward Mwaikali and Rev. Dr. Gwamaka Mwankenja.



Konde visitors with Ruth Shubert

At Munich International Airport, we were met with a group of more than ten people who came to welcome us from many different partner congregations which extended this invitation. We were taken to a small chapel within the Airport for a welcoming word and prayers which were led by Rev. Manfred Kurth. Later we drove to different host families and rested the whole day.

Friday the 25th began with visting Rev. Mrs. Kittelberger, Dean of the district of Munich. We had nice discussion regarding Munich and God`s ministry in here, we exchanged greetings and photos. Then we went around the city, seeing many historical buildings and a lot of attractive areas. We ended the day by having an evening service at Christ church with Rev. Andreas Weigelt, dean of the sub-district of Munich west. There was a Buffet supper and social evening whereby young

boys and girls played music to entertain guests.

Our hosts arranged a nice program which enabled the visiting group to have a tour of Munich, learn history of the Lutheran church in Munich, Regensburg town, Augsburg town, visit a home for unmarried mothers run by Catholic church, Visit the "SOS Center" which offers social services for mothers. We also visited a bicycle repair workshop that gives employment to young unemployed people, it belongs to the church.

It is good to note that they also have 'Diakonia', which is part of the Lutheran`s church "Inner Mission" that offers socials services to all kinds.

While here we learned that this place offers work to unemployed people who help to process and sell second hand furniture and clothes. Clothing is also given freely to the needy. As guests to them, we were all allowed each one of us to choose any item we might have needed. That was our opportunity to choose which one we needed most. Big Munich University teaching hospital was visited too. Trying to compare with our hospitals back home we silently commented, `No wonder these people can live more than one hundred years.`

It is not easy to mention every activity in a small space like in this "News Letter" but it is worth to mention that the trip was extremely good. In between there was time to reflect and ask some

questions about the tour. People gave so many comments about the trip.

There has been so many exchange visits between people from Konde and Munich, like that of the youths and women, but this visit is of its own, because it is for the first time that the partner parishes have invited their partners at a grass root level, and they had some discussions on how to help one another with their partnership committees.



Konde Delegation

When everything went on so well to everyone during the trip, the last day of which we were going to have the last sight seeing in Augusburg town was not so good for me. we were going there to learn about what Martin Luther did there. We were supposed to use a train, and therefore went to the station earlier. My host and I arrived at the station earlier than anybody else thus had enough time to wait for others. As we waited I decided to put my wristwatch on a flower stand facing the sun in order to charge it because it uses solar power. Later on I forgot to pick up my nice watch, the train came, we went in, only to remember when we were already in Augusburg. To me that was a sad day, all day I thought of that

nice expensive watch. To be honest I had a sleepless night.

You might ask why bother about this watch? what is so special about it? the story is like this; When I took studies at Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary in the USA, at my graduation, a well respected friend of mine decided to buy "a good present" for me on that special day. She knew I was coming from Africa and that I am a preacher, and that I needed a nice durable watch. She went in all the shops with her husband and bought that lovely Japanese (casio) watch for me.

Ever since that time I have never had trouble with it, I very much relied on it. For sure the one who picked it must be very lucky. All our efforts of asking the stations officials about lost items ended up in vain, but I am sure our friendship in the Lord Jesus will never be lost.



KONDE LEADERS ATTEND SWEDISH PARTNERS CONFERENCE

Pastor Erasto Mwaipopo
Konde

In September of 2008 the Konde Diocese met with its partners at Matema Lutheran Center. Representatives from partner churches from the USA, Germany, Sweden, and Canada attended. This year in May the SEM had its annual conference in the town of Skeftea which is found in the northern part of the

country. (*Ed Note: The SEM, Swedish Evangelical Mission, is a free church of Sweden, Lutheran in nature, that was born out of a revivalist movement in 1856.*)

Bishop Israel-Peter Mwakyolile and Pastor Erasto Mwaipopo from Konde were invited to attend. They arrived before the conference so that they could preach to churches in the city of Uppsala, which lies in the heart of Sweden, 45 minutes from Stockholm and 25 minutes from Arlanda International Airport. Uppsala is the fourth largest city in Sweden.

"Daring to Grow" was the theme for the SEM meeting. While preaching in Uppsala, we found that some churches initially had closed because they had no people. God provided a pastor full of compassion for the gospel, who asked the officials permission to be given this vacant building to start mission outreach to the youth in schools and universities. Now, after two years time, the church is full of young people and adults.

Another church is St. Clara in Stockholm. The pastor there told us that he started to preach to the prostitutes and drug addicts in the street, and these actions met with ridicule. Presently this church has grown and even some government officials attend. We also participated in preaching to the street people and managed to lead some of them to Jesus.

We then flew to the north for the conference which took place at Scandic hotel for three days. More than 1500 people attended and it was so wonderful. There

were several activities which took place and we were all reminded to “dare to grow” and win people for Christ. We came back home with new vision of bringing people to God. The glory should be to God alone.

A TOUR OF ITETE LUTHERAN HOSPITAL

Jake Maser
LSS

During my visit to the Konde Diocese, I was given a tour of the Itete Lutheran Hospital, which challenged my stereotype of what a hospital looked like.

Itete Lutheran Hospital is a group of one-story buildings perched on top of Kambembe Hill in the village of Itete.

The grounds are well-maintained, with walkways and planted flowers and shrubs along the paths. My tour, taken with Pastor Judy McKee from York, was conducted by Betty Mangula, who happened to be in charge that day due to the absence of Cecilia, the hospital administrator.



Betty Mangula conducted our tour

Itete is a 120 bed facility, with a staff of approximately 80, and serves a population of about 75,000 dispersed through six geographical/political wards

In 2003 (the most recent statistics I could find), the hospital admitted 3098 patients and treated another 5055 in an outpatient capacity.

At the very top of Kabembe hill where the Hospital exists, there used to be a small dispensary built by German Missionaries in 1910 and was destroyed in World War I. Ten years later, in the 1920s the Germans again built a 30 - bed hospital which was destroyed in World War II. Itete Lutheran Hospital construction was started in the late 1950's by Finnish Missionaries and was completed in 1963. Since then it has been expanding gradually. The hospital is administered by the Konde Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania.

We opened our tour with the wards. There was a men's ward, a women's ward, a maternity ward and a children's ward. We didn't get to spend a lot of time in the wards, but it looked as though most of the beds were being occupied.

In the maternity ward, we saw the labor room, complete with the Apgar baby scoring chart.

Adjacent to the labor room was the actual ward, where two very adorable new born babies were sleeping. Also in this ward was a young woman laying on her side resting. Her pregnancy ended with a negative outcome. The Tanzania infant mortality rate is almost 70 per 1000 babies born, ten times that of the United

States. Itete delivers over 200 babies a year, generally.



One Itete Newborn

Our visit included the X-ray room. Our first walk through impressed me, but then I know nothing of X-ray machines. Later on, we met a volunteer doctor from Finland who was just beginning a six week stint at Itete. He took us again to the X-ray room, telling us how the machine was obsolete, dating from the 1950's. It can only take images from one position, and the images are not always clean. Knowing of the Lower Susquehanna financial support to Itete Lutheran Hospital, he implored us to go back to the United States and raise a million dollars for updating the equipment at the hospital. (To date, we are still very, very short of that lofty goal).

There was a room for testing vision, a couple of operating rooms, and much, much more. We went by the line of people waiting to be seen; it was going to be a busy day at the hospital.

Betty showed us the storeroom, proudly noting that through contributions from the Lower Susquehanna Synod they had been able to “stock the shelves”. Pastor McKee and I both agreed that the “stocked” shelves looked rather bare to us.

What does Itete treat? Top three are malaria, pneumonia, and AIDS. Children also have urinary tract infections, acute respiratory infections, bacterial diarrhea disease and intestinal worms.

Lasting impressions: Itete does an outstanding job with what resources it has. It could use better equipment, but it fully maximized what it does have. The top priority right now is keeping doctors. In the past, the Diocese has paid for education for doctors, just to see them leave after a short time. Itete is not able to match the salaries available at government facilities, and attrition of human resources complicates the primary goal of healing people. Volunteers from other countries are always welcome in Itete, with great service opportunities available for both nursing staff and doctors. If this appeals to any of the readers, please contact the Konde Diocese Committee or the Medical Needs Subcommittee (Pastor Schlegel at pastorschlegel@live.com). An informational DVD describing the Itete Lutheran Hospital in more detail was made available to representatives of all LSS congregations at the Synod Assembly in June. Contact Pastor Schlegel to find out if yours was picked up. The DVD was put together by April Trout, a nurse who volunteered at Itete Lutheran Hospital.

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PASTOR MWAIKALI VISITS ST. PETER'S, LANCASTER

June 6th, 2009: It was a great day--St. Peter's Strawberry Festival was a huge success! The Tanzania Mission Committee (TMC) organized a small segment of the festival – the white elephant tables, where we sold a gamut of used items donated by the St. Peter's parishioners – and all the proceeds (over \$1,000) are earmarked for the Busoka community and the orphans in Tanzania.

A special part of the day was meeting and getting to know Pastor Edward Mwaikali, Assistant to the Bishop of the Konde Diocese in Tanzania. Because of the Lower Susquehanna Synod Assembly, he had made his second trip to the United States, which coincided with our Strawberry Festival. He was able to see for himself the hard work, dedication, caring and outreach of the members at St. Peter's.

After cleanup, the TMC and Pastor Edward congregated at Tom and Elizabeth Fechtmann Crippen's home for a wonderful picnic. Pastor Edward was present at both Sunday services on June 7th and expressed his appreciation for the love and support St. Peter's has given Busoka; then we spent 3½ hours over pizza Sunday noon at Kissel Hill's Uncommon Pizza, where we laughed, shared stories, and discovered much about Pastor

Edward, the Tanzanian culture and more insight on the orphans and their needs.

Pastor Edward suggested a grinder for the Busoka community to grind its corn into maize. This would save the women a 2 to 4 mile walk each day, which would free them to spend more time in their community with their children and the orphans. The grinder would not only benefit the Busoka Village but would give it a means of earning an income by offering for a fee the opportunity for other villages to have their corn ground into maize as well. We await more information and guidance from Pastor Edward.

We promised each other to have better lines of communication between our parishes. Pastor Edward wanted all of St. Peter's to know that every orphan has been helped with our prayers and our dollars.

Looking back on the weekend, we realize how small the world has become, how vital St. Peter's is in helping our companion congregation, and how so little from us means so much to them.

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FOR MORE KONDE INFORMATION

Benevolence or general questions: Pastor Cliff Eshbach, Assistant to the Bishop, LSS. Email: ceshbach@lss-elca.org

Companion Congregation program: Pastor Sally Gausmann, St Paul, Trinity Road, York. Email: Pastor.Sally@comcast.net