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# Konde Partnership Newsletter

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



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## A MOTORCYCLE FOR ITETE

Itete congregation sits high atop a hill on the hospital grounds. Its two “daughter” sub-congregations are a fifteen minute ride away by car – if a car was around. In Itete, walking is the common method of transportation. Itete congregation has pulpit exchanges with the evangelists who lead the sub-congregations of Lwambi and Igembe, requiring both evangelists and the Itete pastor to do a fair amount of walking, up, down, and over the hills.

Itete enjoys email communication with its companion congregation in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, Christ Church in Lancaster, using the Itete Hospital computer resources. The Itete spokesperson mentioned that the congregation was raising money to purchase a motorcycle (pikipiki) for use by its pastor in visiting. Christ Church asked around and found out a used pikipiki could be bought for about \$1500, and was able to send the

money to Itete, through the Synod and Konde Diocese offices.



Pastor Klaus Dinkel atop the pikipiki in front of his Itete home

Finally the news came – Itete purchased the pikipiki, and the new pastor (Klaus Dinkel from Germany) was going to learn how to ride it. Pastor Dinkel and the congregation of Itete expressed their joy over the gift, and were pleased to say that when added to what they raised, the money sent was more than enough for the motorcycle, and that other projects are being planned to use the money to benefit the congregation and its village.

Pastor Dinkel writes, “Again I want to say that we are very grateful for your support with the pikipiki (motorbike) which is in steady use and a great help for our

office to travel in our - as you still might remember - hilly area.”

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## ELCA AMBASSADORS TO TANZANIA HOLD ASSEMBLY FORUM

Pastor JMe (Janice Marie E.) and Pastor Bob (Robert) Lowden are the regional representatives from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of American (ELCA) to grow the relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT).



Jme and Bob Lowden, in a photo on their website

After spending two years in Tanzania, they are back in the U.S. for their “home assignment.” All ELCA Mission Personnel are required to return every two years for a period of two months in order to visit their sponsoring

congregations. Because of their position as Regional Representatives, they are also required to visit Companion Synods and attend meetings with the Africa Team.

In June, the Lowdens hosted a forum at the Lower Susquehanna Synod's Assembly where they shared some new facts about Tanzania and the ELCT which bear sharing.

The ELCT is now the second largest member of the Lutheran World Federation, behind the Church of Sweden. Where does the ELCA rank? The ELCA ranks fourth, behind another African Lutheran church in Ethiopia. The ELCT was the fastest growing church in Africa in 2009, growing its membership by 14%, and has over 5.2 million members.



**Pastor Lowden speaking at the assembly forum**

Tanzania has a population of over 41 million. The median age is 18, which means half the population is under 18, half is over. Life expectancy is now 52 years. In U.S. dollars, their per capita income is \$440 a year. Sixty percent of the population now calls

itself Christian, according to the latest statistics provided.

The Lowden's introduced forum participants to the long-term missionaries that the ELCA sponsors in Tanzania. It is an impressive list of doctors, pastors and teachers that are funded through the ELCA. One missionary is retiring. For 30 years, Nancy Stevenson has taught English to students at Makumira, which included many of the ELCT's pastors. She came to Tanzania in 1979 as a missionary of the Lutheran Church in America. She is a graduate of Temple University, Philadelphia. In addition to teaching English to first year students at the university, Nancy proofreads many of the final research papers of the Bachelor of Divinity students and the theses of the Masters of Theology students. She, also, serves in various consulting roles when an English specialist is needed.

The Lowdens stressed that when a dollar is dropped in the collection plate, a portion goes to Synod. A portion of the Synod money is sent to the ELCA national office, where a portion of that is used to help fund the missionaries serving in Tanzania.

Although their assignment was scheduled to last four years, Pastors JMe and Bob Lowden have made the decision to end their service

after two years for personal reasons.

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## **MATEMA WATERFALL**

(Ed. Note: This article is a first hand account of a trip to Matema's Waterfall from Daniel Orth, who was part of the group from LSS that visited Konde in July.)

Arriving at Matema Beach we were told that we'd have a chance to hike to a nearby waterfall. Two locals had agreed to serve as our guides. I went to bed excited by the prospect of being outside and getting to see some of the local environment. When the time to go came the next morning, we set off in cars for a brief ten minute drive to get to the start of the "trail" closer to the falls. We were told that when we got done with the hike, we wouldn't want to walk back to the resort and would appreciate the cars. It would turn out to be sage advice.

Preparing to set off, our guides stripped down to shorts, the first time I'd seen Tanzanian men in such attire. The action hinted at the arduous task that lay ahead. We set off and quickly found that the "trail" to the waterfall was little more than the suggestion of a path. Still, our motley assortment of hikers, young and old, foreigners and locals, men and women, continued to trudge along. Stopping to lead one another back and forth across the stream, carefully stepping

from one wobbly rock to another, we quickly developed a kinship, a connection that bonded the group together. We slipped, stumbled, fell, got wet, and yet kept on, all the while helping each other, mindful that we were all making this hike together.



**Trail to the waterfall**

The path became increasingly perilous and we became worried that some members of the group would not be able to make the final leg of the climb. We suggested we all turn back rather than risk an injury, but those members who had elected to stay behind insisted that the handful of us daring enough to continue finish the hike.

After another thirty minutes we at last reached the base of the falls and found ourselves staring up a monstrous rock face, water spilling over from the sky above. We took some beautiful photos and then turned to hike back and rejoin

the group. In all it took us a little over three hours to climb to see the waterfall. The view of the falls was impressive, the scenery along the hike inspiring.



**The Falls!!**



**Lending a helping hand**

But the image that lingers most is that of ten people carefully helping one another scramble over rocks and carefully picking our way along narrow ledges. It was a view of humanity having come together to work towards a common goal.

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**MATEMA BEACH**

There is a beautiful spot in the world that is meant to be enjoyed that is called Matema Beach, Tanzania. Matema rests along Lake Nyasa (also

known as Lake Malawi), with the Livingstone Mountains towering above.

The Matema Beach View Lutheran Centre is situated along the beach, and offers a breathtaking view of the lake and the mountain range. The Centre is owned and operated by the Konde Diocese of the ELCT.



**The Centre**

The hotel is run by Hotel Manager Steven Ghambi together with his co-worker James Adam. Steven refers to Matema a “paradise on earth”. There are two cooks on staff that prepare both traditional regional food as well as international dishes.

Originally built in 1911 to house German missionaries from Berlin Mission, it was recently renovated in 2007/2008 by a partnership between the Konde Diocese and the Lutheran Church District Southern Tondern / Germany. The renovation was given into the hands of the German Architect Jochen Figur, who is working for all Lutheran Dioceses in the southern part of Tanzania. There is an Administration Block, Reception and 4 Guestrooms in the former

kitchen house, which has been renovated in 2006 under supervision of Reverend Bultmann from Southern Tondern.



Almost sunset at Matema Beach

The first Missionaries from the Berlin Mission Society arrived on the September 25<sup>th</sup> 1891 at the northern shore of Lake Nyasa. That is the land of the Nyakyusa Tribe and called Konde to this time. Therefore the Diocese has the name "Konde Diocese". The Missionaries came from South Africa over the Zambesi River, Shire River and Lake Nyasa to Matema.

On the 2. October 1891 they started to build the first Mission Station on the hill Ipagika near the Livingstone Mountains, about 30 km distance from the Lake.

The first Station was called " Wangemannshoeh" in honor of the Director of the Berlin Mission Society. Today only the foundation is left and there is a monument which the Konde Diocese has built in 1991 for the jubilee "100 years Evangelical Church in Southern Tanzania".

On August 24<sup>th</sup> in 1893 the Mission station in Ikombe, the half island at the eastern shore

of Lake Nyasa, was founded. But the Missionaries had problems with the climate, and they decided to shift to Matema. Then in 1911 the Berlin Missionary Dorst built a new tropical house in Matema. Until today the house has still firm foundation. Over the years there were several renovations and the last in 2007 / 08.

Due to the two World Wars in the last century the German Missionaries were often away and replaced by English, Scottish and Scandinavian Missionaries. But the Germans came back again and again. Today the house belongs to the Konde Diocese and is used as a Guesthouse.

The Konde Diocese was founded in 1982. The Konde Diocese is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT ), which has been established in 1963.

Matema Beach View Lutheran Centre is a Hotel for guests who like to rest, relax and enjoy swimming in the lake enjoy fishing or to tour areas around Matema. It is also a center for seminars and meetings.



Four-bed cabin on the beach

The guesthouses are African-thatched cottages, all situated on the beach. They are made of bamboo, wood and bricks. The windows have mosquito wire, enabling guests to always enjoy a nice lake breeze. The lakeside windows are provided with shutters to prevent heavy wind. Sometimes the lake can be very rough with strong high waves.

Guests might imagine they are staying at the seaside. The lake is long and deep (700m).

Accommodations at Matema Beach View Lutheran Centre include accommodation for approximately one hundred people:

- 6 cottages with double beds for couples
- 3 cottages with twin beds
- 3 double cottages with twin beds
- 1 cottage with triple beds
- 1 cottage with four beds
- All are self-contained.

There are three rectangle cottages, called Behewa (wagon) for 42 people

1. Behewa has 4 rooms with twin beds, 2 toilets and showers together.
2. Behewa has 8 rooms with 4 toilets and 4 showers in the middle of the cottage .Four rooms have twin beds and four rooms have 2 beds and 1 double-decker.
3. Behewa has 3 rooms with double-decker and 2 toilets and 1 shower. Two rooms are

for 4 people and one room for 2 people.

The **VIP Holiday House** is the cream of all with 2 double-bed rooms, 1 toilet and 1 shower, 1 sitting-room with a kitchenette (gas cooker). Therefore the Holiday House is also very nice for a family. The **Main House** (old Missionary House) has 3 self-contained double-bed rooms.



The bistro serving great food

We prepare traditional and international food by order. While staying at Matema Beach, guests can enjoy the **Dining Hall, which** has the capacity to serve breakfast, lunch and dinner for 100 people or the **Bistro Sunset, seating** up to 70 people. The **Bistro** also offers snacks, soft and warm drinks. Due to Lutheran Church Regulation the Hotel does not sell or serve alcoholic drinks. The **Kiosk at the Beach** serves soft drinks (guests can also buy some beach clothes here). The **Conference Hall, the Dinning Hall** and the open **Beach Hall** can be hired for seminars, meetings and parties.

Prices for the rooms and meals are very reasonable.

Things to see while at Matema include Lake Nyassa situated in the East African Rift Valley at the height of 500 m over sea level. The lake is the third largest lake of Africa with a length of 580 km and wideness at the widest point of 80 km and a deepness of 700m.



Who says you have to do something?

**Snorkeling:** In the lake you find the world - known unique species of small colorful fish called Cichlids. These fish you will find on the edge of the lake along the Livingstone Mountains where the lakeshore is rocky and stony. Therefore you can hire a canoe and snorkeling equipment at the Hotel Reception and enjoy snorkeling. Cichlids are mouth brooders, meaning that they keep live young fish in their mouths. If you are lucky you can spot mothers with a cloud of tiny silver fish around them and if you scare them you will see all the baby fish swim into the mother's mouth.

**Waterfall:** You can make a walk to the beautiful waterfall. Because this is also the intake of the water supply of the village you have to pay a

fee and to take a guide (see Reception). The way is very rocky and slippery and sometimes you have to climb a little bit. You will need 1 1/2 hour for one way.

**Ikombe - Pottery Village:** In Ikombe, a small peninsula circa 10 km to the south at the eastern shore, lives the Wakisi Tribe. They are specialized in pottery. The women are doing the pottery just only by hand and they will show you how they are forming the pots.

Saturday morning is market day when the pots are brought to the market in Matema. It is a very lively market. Ikombe can be reached by boat or on foot. The road goes only up to the market place.

To enjoy the surroundings guests can hire a bicycle or canoe, available at the reception desk.



Gazebo on the beach

**Climate:** September to November is the dry season with mainly warm and beautiful weather. December to May is the rainy season, with humid, warm and rainy weather. Especially in May it rains a lot. But the roads are generally passable

throughout the year.  
June/July/August are the cooler (and at times very windy) months.

Located just beside the Lutheran Centre complex is the Matema Lutheran Church.



**Matema Church**

In conclusion, if you are planning a trip to Tanzania, attempt to get a couple of days included for a stay at Matema Beach.

*(Ed. Note: Most of this information was lifted off an internet document advertizing Matema Beach. I stayed in Matema four days, and I thought it was the most scenic and calm place in the world. Warning, after reading all the great things – for those who place importance on these things – at the time I was there, electricity was only on for a couple of hours in the evening. Running water was turned off during the night. There are oil lamps in the rooms (I took my own candle) and buckets to fill to provide overnight water. If I ever get back to Konde for an extended period, a week stay at Matema will be included. The service was outstanding, the management was efficient, and the scenery was indescribable.)*

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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

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