



Troesters in Tanzania



Happy New Year!

For our January newsletter, we would like to give a glimpse of some of the many things we did in 2017 as ELCA East Africa Regional Representatives. Part of our work involves visiting our partners here in East Africa, encouraging them in their work, and reporting back to Global Mission and our supporting churches about the great things happening here on the ground.



Bishop Mameo of the Morogoro, Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The poster reads, "Don't exchange girls for cows. Give them an education."

We had visited Bishop Mameo of Morogoro before, but in October it was time for another visit. A Maasai by birth, Bishop Mameo's family tradition includes raising large herds of cattle. Sometimes cattle are exchanged for a bride in this culture, often leading to early marriage, so that the girl's father can increase his herd. This usually

means an end to the girl's education. Bishop Mameo stands up against this tradition. We love this poster that he keeps in his office! Deborah had the chance to chat with him about the ELCA's International Women's Scholarship Program, which sends young women from our partner churches to four-year Lutheran Colleges in the U.S. Bishop Mameo is hoping that a couple of young women from his diocese may benefit from this scholarship, and he is encouraging good candidates from his diocese to apply.



Women of the Lake Tanganyika Diocese, proudly displaying their products for sale

In November Lake Tanganyika Diocese in southwestern Tanzania was on our agenda. This is a new diocese without many outside partners. ELCA-Global Mission has supported the Women's Ministry of this new diocese, enabling them to purchase a farm that will serve as a place to grow vegetables and develop bee-keeping. Above is a photo of some of the women of the diocese, proudly displaying their products for sale: baskets, beadwork, fabrics, home-made bread, and honey. Funds go to promote the Women's Ministry and to assist community members in need.



Joe and Deborah Troester receiving gifts at the inauguration of the new Women's Center in Ketumbeine

Another part of our work is helping and encouraging our fellow ELCA missionaries in East Africa. In March, colleagues Dr. Steve and Bethany Friberg celebrated the inauguration of a new Women's Center in Ketumbeine, where Dr. Steve serves eleven rural clinics. Bethany has worked

with the women of their village for twenty years now to develop a bead-making project. Sales from the project have enabled over fifty children to attend school—some even have graduated from college! The money has also helped the women buy goats and other livestock, so that they can earn some extra cash from the goats' milk or sale of its offspring. This raises the standard of living for the whole family.



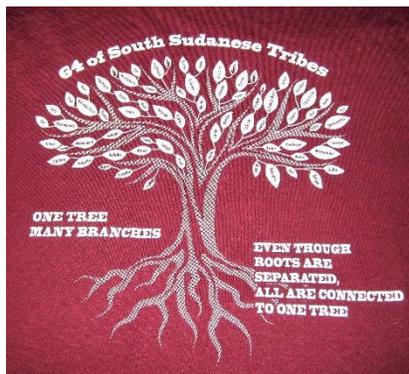
Mr. M. Mallumbo, ELCT Deputy Secretary General for Planning and Development, addresses a group of visitors including: Deborah Troester, Rahel Mwitula Williams, and Andrew Steele

In September we were blessed by the visit of thirteen people from ELCA Mission Advancement: nine ELCA church leaders and four ELCA staff members. They were touring ELCA-sponsored projects in Tanzania and Rwanda. We helped organize their visit, and assisted in making some videos showing the work of several ELCA missionaries and local partners. They visited the Headquarters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and met its leaders.



The Reconciliation Lutheran Center in Juba, South Sudan

Finally, perhaps the biggest project in our region was completed and inaugurated this past November 16: The Reconciliation Lutheran Center in Juba, South Sudan. This beautiful center includes a sanctuary for worship, office space, classrooms, and a clinic. The project has brought together people from several of South Sudan's warring ethnic groups. Together we worshiped in peace as the center was dedicated. A special t-shirt was made for the celebration, and people danced in the street before enjoying a huge meal together.



**Left: A special t-shirt made for the inauguration
Above: Women dancing in the street during the inauguration of the Reconciliation Lutheran Center in Juba**

So maybe this gives you a taste of what we did in 2017. We thank all of you for your continued support and prayers that made all of this, and much more, possible.

Joe and Deborah are missionaries living in Arusha, Tanzania, where they are the East Africa Regional Representatives for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and work in Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda. Their daughter, Christa, is a sophomore at the University of Southern California.

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