

Mwatasi Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 721
Kilolo, Iringa, TZ

April 5, 2016

Greetings to Pastor Chaula, Evangelists, and all our dear friends in the Mwatasi congregation and preaching points!

As I write this it is a cool and rainy day here, 2 degrees Celsius. The weather tells me it is 21° in Iringa. We remember that it is not quite as warm in Mwatasi as in Iringa, but certainly warmer than it is here at our home now. We have been hearing of the rain and floods in the Iringa region and you have been in our prayers. We pray that you and your neighbors are able to get your crops planted. We pray that the sun will warm the ground and allow the seeds to grow and the rain will not be a flood.

We were happy to learn from Pastor Msigwa that you have been planting trees as an economic venture for the parish. Five acres per year, we were told. What a wonderful plan – congratulations on your good stewardship! I remember well the first year I was in Mwatasi with you, in 2005. One day I was down by the river where there is a large water wheel with Chris Catlin. You had many tree seedlings at that time planted there.

We have also received a fine list of your students in secondary school under scholarship. We continue to keep all your students and their families in our prayers for their good health and learning. We hope there are many more students from this congregation who are also enrolled in secondary school, in addition to these on scholarship.

These are shared dreams and prayers - that our children are all able to attend school daily, with healthy minds and bodies, in schools with good resources and well-trained teachers. We pray that our children will all be able to concentrate, learn and act kindly with others.

In October we were pleased to hear a presentation at Trinity Lutheran on Iringa Hope by Itiweni Luhwago and Tom Hendrickson. They were introduced by Pastor Chuck and Flo Claus, whom you must remember. They were both teachers at Tumaini University some years ago and have been strong supporters of our companion congregation relationship. Both Pastor Chuck and Flo have encouraged our members to contribute to the start-up funds for the Mwatasi SACCOS. We are so happy to learn that the village of Mwatasi has completed the requirements for organizing your SACCOS. We rejoice with you in having this wonderful resource in your community! We pray for the final legal registration of the Mwatasi SACCOS. We pray for the members of the SACCOS and the financial education, resources, and improvement that the SACCOS brings to the community.

We have been going through some painful changes at Trinity and we would appreciate your prayers for our well-being also. We have been working on healing and moving forward in a

positive future. In the past two years we have lost many members and we are dealing with difficult financial problems.

We now have a much smaller staff and are in transition between pastors. One of the recent changes we have had to make is the elimination of the Mission Director position that was held by Tom Thiets. We ask for your prayers for Tom and his family as he seeks God's guidance for his work and service.

We are happy to tell you that we once again have a Mission Committee that includes several people who have been privileged to experience the companionship of our partnership first-hand. You may remember Michele Hermansen, Vic Thalacker and John Hodler who were all on the water project team in 2005. Heidi White is on the committee and her father and husband have both been to Mwatasi and Bomalangombe, so she feels very close to you. And you remember Marlene Harty (Mama Marlene) who has visited many times also. Renae Oswald-Anderson is our committee chair and she was on the last trip when the team was unable to reach Mwatasi for the church service because of the rain and bad road. Renae's husband, Fred, was on the 2005 and 2006 teams to Mwatasi. So we have many people on the Mission Committee with their hearts in Mwatasi.

As you pray for Trinity during this time of change, please pray for:

- Strength, wisdom and grace for our church council and leaders on committees
- Patience, understanding, hope and healing for members who feel hurt by the changes
- A spirit of gratitude for all we have
- The Holy Spirit to work in us in all ways.

We are grateful for this Companion relationship for all these years. Please forgive us for not writing. It is our goal to improve our contact with you.

We hope you will write back to us and tell us more about Mwatasi Lutheran Church, its people, and some more introduction of Pastor Chaula and your family. We are also interested to know if there is any news of electricity coming for the village of Mwatasi.

With our warm greetings to all the people of the Mwatasi Lutheran Church and its preaching points, and the students in secondary school.

Partners in Christ,

Michele Hermansen, Tanzania Coordinator
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