



TANZANIA MISSION TRIP



**I HAVE BEEN
ON A NUMBER
OF MISSION
TRIPS AS A
LUTHERAN
PASTOR, BUT
THIS ONE WAS
DIFFERENT!**

*by Rev. Steve Bauerle '78
layout: Kate Borer '13*

In 2010, Dr. Nahum Nassari, from Dodoma, Tanzania, spoke to our Lutheran Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly and shared the mortality rates of pregnant women, and mothers and their infant children, which have been steadily worsening for many years. His call from God was to change that. His vision for us became a “call to action” for me and people within our synod.

In November of 2012, after a 16-hour airplane flight, and a 20-hour bus ride, 19 people, including three doctors, three pastors, two nurse practitioners, a nurse, a dentist, a pharmacist, an engineer, two recent college graduates, a medical supply salesman, an accountant, a church worker, and a photographer, accepted his challenge and fulfilled his vision through a medical mission trip to Dodoma and the villages of Kibakwe and Mzogle.

For three months we packed more than \$250,000 worth of medicine, medical supplies, and water filters and named our Mission trip “Tumaini,” which is an African word meaning “hope.”

The first morning we walked out to our clinic more than 400 people were waiting for medical care!

By the time we left five days later, we were able to touch the lives of more than 1,500 people by healing, assessing health conditions, giving medicine, medical supplies, or addressing simple hygiene needs. One of the true blessings of our trip is happening now as we are planning for “Esther,” a 13-year-old little girl, to come to Toledo to have her severely deformed face corrected.



Since we arrived back home in November 2012, many people have asked the question, “What did you see while you were there?” There are a lot of answers to that question. We saw diseases. malaria, HIV/AIDS, TB, cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, pneumonia and many others, that, in many cases were cured by our medicine. We saw poverty and many, many children.



Some of those children came with fear, sadness, and the diseases that I just mentioned. Others came smiling, running and laughing. Many of them left with medicine and hope because their pain and their diseases were gone.

We saw lots of OUR American clothes that had been given them by others who had been there before us, like shoes and hats and shirts and some of those shirts said funny things on them like, “Don’t mess with Texas,” and words like those on the shirt of a 90-year-old woman that said, “Boys locker room supervisor!”

One of the shirts that I packed for my trip was a Defiance College t-shirt. While I was walking through the village called Kibakwe, one of the little children asked me what the shirt said, and I told him, “Defiance College.” I think he was really wanting me to give



him “the shirt off my back,” but because I was afraid of scaring him with what he would see underneath, I waited until the last night before we went home, and then left behind most of my clothes, including my DC shirt!

My hope is that that it will not only clothe a child that it went to, but when President Gordon and his group visit Tanzania later this year, they will find a child running around with a smile and a shirt that is too big and too long with the words on the front that say Defiance College!

(Rev. Bauerle is the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Waterville, Ohio.)

