

Greetings to my sponsoring churches! When I wrote last month, I was just arriving in Arusha, Tanzania, which will be my base of operations when my new job begins in 2013. Arusha is a city of about 1.3 million people and is surrounded by a lot of famous parks and landscapes like the eastern branch of the Great Rift Valley, the Serengeti National Park, the Ngorogoro Crater, the Olduvai Gorge, Mount Kilimanjaro, and Mount Meru which is closer to the city. The majority of the population of the city is African with large minorities of Arab and Indian people, so I will certainly be able to find restaurants to take care of my need for Indian food.

Arusha has a really nice climate. It's usually in the mid 80s during the day and then cools off to the 60s during the night. There is a time of the year when the low drops into the 40s, but that doesn't last long.

And there is a rainy season when it is very – well, rainy! While I was there – it was very dry and that equals dusty.

Several days I went to devotions at the Nation Church Office. The devotions were in Kiswahili – another language I don't speak – but the singing was beautiful with very nice harmonization. I met with the General Secretary of the ELCT (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania) and he told me a little about the history and ministry of Lutherans in Tanzania. In a nutshell, there has been a Lutheran presence in Tanzania since the 1800s. In colonial days, there were seven Lutheran churches in Tanzania (then Tanganyika and Zanzibar) sent by different mission societies - from Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and America.

In 1938, the churches founded a federation known as the Federation on Lutheran Churches in Tanganyika. Tanzania gained independence in 1961, and in 1963, the churches merged to become the ELCT.

I stayed in hotels most of the time I was in Arusha, but I did look around the city to see where I might like to live once I move there. I saw a couple of places that I liked a lot but doubt they will still be available when I am ready to move in. But I got an idea of the neighborhoods that would be suitable – that is to say, neighborhoods with Indian restaurants and shops.

I spent about three weeks in Arusha, visiting Lutheran hospitals and meeting the local staff and some of the volunteer medical people who spend time in Tanzania. I visited a nice hospital in Moshi called Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center. This hospital has been around for awhile and they do a lot of interesting stuff I'm interested in learning about. While visiting there, I met with the Medical director and he saw to it that both my pairs of sandals were mended and made as good as new in their orthopedic lab where they make artificial limbs, and braces and such. I also visited the new hospital in Arusha. I met with the head of Palliative Care and there are very good things happening in that area.

Another place I visited was Makumira which started out as a seminary and has since branched out to offer law and music and some other subjects as well. I also met half of a missionary couple who were in the orientation group with me six years ago. If any of your youth went to the Youth Gathering in New Orleans this past summer, they would have heard their daughter Megan speak. I also visited Nkoaranga Hospital near the base of Mount Meru. It's an 80 bed hospital headed by a very nice orthopedic doctor and it has a good palliative care team. Then it was back to pack up once again.

I took a shuttle from Arusha to Nairobi. The bus was an hour late picking me up, but we got in an hour early! I went to stay in the guest house at the convent at Nazareth Hospital where I have stayed before.

The sisters are from Tamil Nadu, India, and they make wonderful masala dosai. The sisters treat me like a visiting priest and that is very good treatment indeed. A very nice priest, originally from Tamil Nadu, was also staying there for a couple of days. He'd served in Arusha for ten years and was now in rural Kenya. I enjoyed talking to him and he offered some good contacts in Arusha I flew from Nairobi to Zurich and from there to San Francisco and then to Honolulu where I will be until the end of the year. Even though Hawaii is a beautiful place, I still need your prayers, and I will always keep you in mine. Peace, John