



THE

SEER

SALEM LUTHERAN CHURCH AUGUST 2026

Salem's School Kit Collection

A Note from the Service Ministry

The start of school is just around the corner, and so is Salem's annual school kit collection. Lutheran World Relief sponsors this program in which churches collect school supplies and sew draw-string backpacks. The filled backpacks get distributed to places where there are kids who want to go to school and need to be equipped to do so. **Be on the lookout for a display table/collection point in the central hallway and pick up a list of supplies needed to fill the packs** – then purchase items and return them to the collection point. If you have basic sewing skills you can also pick up fabric and directions to make the backpacks (it takes about 20 minutes to make these once you get the hang of it). Be on the lookout for sales on school supplies in August! If you can't shop or sew, you can contribute \$\$ and a Service Ministry member will head to Staples in OKC, where supplies are always cheaper – just memo your check to Salem as "school kits."

Back To School Sundays

With such a large and extended community of educational institutions and varying start dates, we won't have a single "back to school" Sunday at Salem this year, but three blessing portions at the end of worship services in August. August 2nd will focus on Langston University, August 9th will focus on Stillwater Public Schools, and August 16th will focus on OSU. Everyone (students, teachers, faculty, staff, guardians, parents and grandparents, etc) is welcome to come up with backpacks, briefcases, etc for each week regardless of the specific focus for a blessing!

Blessings of Backpacks and Briefcases dates:
August 2nd, August 9th, August 16th



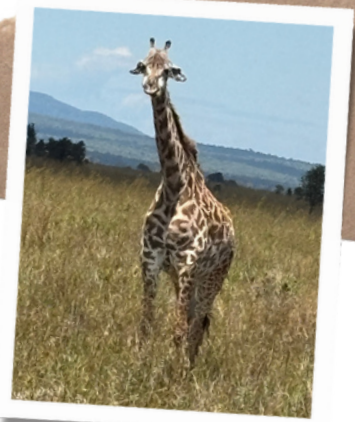


Berega bintis

TANZANIA

2026 TANZANIA MEDICAL TEAM
JUNE 11 - JUNE 28, 2026

Report provided by Cindy Pennie



Mikumi Game Park

We had a small but brave group this year, as we traveled through the Middle East in the midst of war. We had safe and uneventful flights with nothing to indicate increased military presence or activity during our brief layovers in Doha, Qatar.

Our team of 5 included David Houck (University Lutheran in Palo Alto, CA) as our fundi (fix-it guy), John Houck (Lord of Life Lutheran in Edmond, OK) as our physician, Lizbeth Huggins (Faith Lutheran in Little Rock, AR) as our vital sign taker and baby hat crocheter, LaTesa Williams (All Saints Lutheran in OKC, OK) as our check-in person and spread sheet expert, and Cindy Pennie (Salem Lutheran in Stillwater, OK) as team leader and nurse.

Our Tanzanian friends Epsilon and Kishumu met us at the airport in Dar es Salaam, and arranged for two Bolts (Tanzanian Ubers) to take us and our luggage to the train station, where we boarded the high-speed train for a two hour trip to Morogoro. So much better than previous years on a bus for 6 to 8 hours!

On Sunday morning we went to church at 10:00am at the Bishop's church, Bungo. The service began with a procession with drums and horns, included 7 or 8 choirs, 5 offerings, a sermon, and promotions for three different pastors – each with their own ceremony. At 3:00pm we finally joined the procession out of the church! There was a meal afterwards. We got back to our rooms after 6:00pm, a long day!

On Monday morning we visited the Diocese office and Bishop Pindua. We then stopped to greet Dr Kasuwi, the director of Mazimbu Hospital. He told us that over 100 people had come to the hospital that morning to see us. Staff had taken down names and phone numbers and told them to come back tomorrow. We went to Mazimbu later in the afternoon, unloaded the supplies we had with us, and got everything situated to start seeing patients in the morning.

Over the next four days we checked in patients, trying to have only 20 to 30 for Dr John to see each day. He saw many patients with nose and throat issues due to air pollution and cooking over charcoal fires, and many with hearing loss issues. He was able to do basic testing for them and referred many to bigger cities for more treatment options. We worked most days until 5:30 or 6:00.

TANZANIA

Among the more challenging patients Dr John saw was a young woman who had a tracheostomy about a year ago but still had the same tube in her neck – we were able to get her two new sets of tubes and make sure she could take care of them properly. He saw a young man with a mass in one side of his nose – we sent him to get a CT scan (paid for scan, less than \$50). After results back we made referral to hospital in Dar es Salaam where he could get surgery, and covered bus fare for the trip. Another young woman had a neck mass that initially looked like a lipoma that could be removed under local anesthetic, but we sent her for a CT scan to make sure. The scan showed thyroglossal duct cyst, a condition that will require a major surgery in Dar es Salaam. We were able to pay for her insurance (\$200 to cover for a year) which will cover most of the cost for the surgery.

On Wednesday evening, after discussions with the Tishos, and our team, I sent an email to Bp Pindua. I thanked him for including us in the celebrations on the previous Sunday. I told him I had been to the dispensary in Mkulazi in 2010 and that we understand the need for repairs there, and we will share that need in our congregations. I told him I was concerned about the difficulty for our team to spend 4 hours driving on very poor roads to get there, several hours for church, then 4 hours back to Morogoro – and be ready to work again on Monday morning. I asked if we might instead go to a closer village, Maseyu, where Pr Raymond Dunia serves several churches. I told him I had known Pr Dunia for many years, that he had even visited in Oklahoma in the past. Bp Pindua responded very quickly, thanked me for caring for our team, and agreed that Maseyu would be a good place for us to go on Sunday.

On Saturday we went to Berega, a small village about an hour or so from Morogoro, where the Tishos are directors of the Berega Infants Center. They currently have 29 babies, including 7 sets of twins. With the help of the bintis (girls) from the babies' families, they care for the babies until they are three years old. The bintis are given training and education during that time. They go back home with the babies to help them transition back into the families. We brought a suitcase of clothes, diapers, onesies, blankets, socks, and bags to give them – many provided by University Heights Baptist Church group of sewers. Lizbeth also brought crocheted baby hats for all of them. After we watched the toddlers have lunch and go to their beds for naps, we got to meet all the bintis. They told us their names, ages, and relationship to the baby/babies they were caring for. They ranged from 9 years old to early 20s, with most in their teens. They are caring for siblings, nieces and nephews, cousins. We thanked them for the important work they are doing.



Berega toddlers eating lunch



Lizbeth & new friend



Hats for Berega

TANZANIA

On Sunday we went to Maseyu, to Pr Raymond Dunia's church. After the 2 ½ hour service we had a simple lunch. Pr Raymond brought an 8 year old boy to us for Dr John to look at. His face was swollen and he could barely open his mouth. We asked if he could come to Mazimbu on Monday to be examined there. The family is very poor, so we provided bus fare for the boy and a family member to come to Morogoro.

On Monday we saw the boy, Haidary, from Maseyu. X-rays showed infection in bone, he will be admitted to the hospital for IV antibiotics for 6 weeks, and followed by the dentist next week, and an infectious disease doctor. We obtained and paid for the first week of IV antibiotics, they were started on Tuesday. Dr John felt a CT scan was needed so we had that done on Wednesday. The CT scan showed he has Burkitt's lymphoma, a cancer of the bone. His jaw bone was almost gone. He will have to go to a cancer hospital, with treatment he has a good prognosis. He went home on Thursday, to travel on to Ifakara Mission Hospital, with help from the church.

Dr John was able to do a couple of minor surgeries but couldn't do more because he didn't have proper instruments and the suture he needed. We referred another patient to Dar es Salaam for surgery for an encephalocele (a hole in the skull allowing brain tissue and fluid to leak out under the skin), identified by CT scan. After 8 days at Mazimbu Hospital we saw a little over 200 patients, 80 seen in consultation by the Mazimbu doctors, at least 120 seen by Dr John.

David, our fix-it guy, was able to get the washing machine at the hospital repaired using parts from a similar broken machine from another hospital. The man who does the laundry at the hospital was having to do it all by hand, including sheets and surgery drapes. He was very happy with David's work! David also replaced a sink and worked on numerous doors in the hospital.



Left to right: Kristen & Lemsanya Tisho, John Houck, David Houck, Dr Omar Kasuwi, Cindy Pennie, LaTesa Williams, Lizbeth Huggins

TANZANIA



50+ pounds of baby things



Handwashing before lunch

While LaTesa and Lizbeth were on an adventure to Zanzibar, John, David and Cindy finished up at the hospital on Thursday and went to the nearby game park Mikumi on Friday. We saw elephants up close, giraffes and zebras, wildebeests and a stork nesting in the top of a baobab tree, lots of gazelles and monkeys. We all met together again at the train station on Saturday, our friends Epsilon and Kishumu helped us get Bolts to take us to the airport, with a nice lunch on the Indian Ocean on the way.

We had a long, and uneventful, trip home, arriving in Dallas on Sunday afternoon, then on to our respective homes. We all felt like we had been able to make an impact on the lives of those we came to serve.

August Birthdays and Anniversaries



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

12 Olie Weaver
12 Andrew Gipson
15 Jan Anderson
20 Eric Ebersole
22 Sharon Schonthaler
22 Michelle Hubbard
23 Lynn Lester
28 Annette Cowell
30 Jacque Jones



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

5 Belinda & Ray Hammergren
13 Annette & Rick Cowell
14 Cindy & Mark Pennie
17 Scott & Maria Wolff
30 Elaine & Bruce Ackerson



Attention Book Lovers

If you have books that you've finished that are now stacking up in the corners, here's a good reason to finally move them out. Salem's Annual Holiday Sale in December will include a used book sale and we need donations. Just bring them to Salem and drop them off at a table in the the Parish hall.

All genres needed.

August Volunteers

	August 2 10 th Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 18	August 9 11 th Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 19	August 16 12 th Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 20	August 23 13 th Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 21	August 30 14 th Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 22
Assisting Minister	Keith Schmidt	Rick Cowell	Mark Pennie	Kevin Gerfen	Tricia Auberle
Altar Guild	Maria Moccia- Wolff	Mary Jo Shiever	Elaine Ackerson	Joanna Gipson	Dorothy Johnson
Ushers	Pat Darlington and Tracy Nordquist	Dorothy Johnson and Catherine Vijayakumar	Jan and Ken Bartels	Brad Rickelman and Roger Sahs	Roger and Teri Sahs
Greeters	Elaine Ackerson	Sharon Schonthaler	Pam Talley	Helen Gragert and Cammie	Annette Cowell
Counters	Priscilla Gerfen and Michelle Ratzlaff	Cindy Haseley and Keith Schmidt	Lori Oltmanns and Paula Long	Priscilla Gerfen and Maria Moccia- Wolff	Michelle Ratzlaff and Keith Schmidt



Evangelical Lutheran
Church (ELCA)
101 S. Duck St.
Stillwater OK 74074

MINISTRY STAFF

Pastor ~ Rev. Breck Cogswell
Director of Music ~ Krystal Hennessey
Choir Director ~ Elizabeth Albright
Parish Nurse ~ Cindy Pennie
Office Coordinator ~ Karen Belden
Media Specialist ~ Olie Weaver

CHURCH OFFICE

Monday - Friday 9am -1 pm
405-372-3074
salemelc@sbcglobal.net



9:30 AM SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

August 2 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 18
August 9 Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 19
August 16 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 20
August 23 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 21
August 30 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary 22

The nursery is available during the Worship Service.
Coffee hour is after Worship Service.

Children's Sunday School - 10:45 am
Library Sunday School - 11 am
Adult Discussion Class - 11 am

Join us on Facebook at Salem Lutheran Church or watch anytime
on YouTube.
Salem ELC Stillwater OK