



Letter from Council:

2 Corinthians: 1

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

With these words Paul begins his second letter to the people of Corinth, speaking of the comfort we receive from God; and the fact that not only do we need to share that comfort with others, but also that we receive God's comfort through other people. God, self and community – with comfort and love flowing among all three, and in all directions between the three.

For those who may not know, last week we emptied out our classrooms and sanctuary and put everything in storage in the library area. Our neighbor, ALMC, wanted someplace for people to stay, away from the hospital itself, while waiting for COVID-19 test results. Our day staff are on leave, and Vivi, our Administrator, and I took all we needed from the office to work from home.

Yesterday, I went to ALMC to deliver something, and found the whole area of our church cordoned off. I sat in my car in the hospital parking lot for quite a while, looking at the tape going across the road into our parking lot; and just did not know what to think or how to feel. It all seemed so different, so unfamiliar. I prayed for any who might be using our rooms, and for those who were taking care of them. Then I saw the little blue flowers growing at the back of the office – and I was comforted with God's peace.

We each have to learn how to deal with the unfamiliar; especially the fact that we can no longer attend our church. ALMC has the use of our facilities until they are no longer needed. Our faith family is scattered, and below you will read two meditations; one from someone who left, and one from someone who stayed. But it comforts me that wherever we are or whatever we may be experiencing, we are loved by God. May He be with you each day, until we can meet again.

-Susan Simonson ACC Council Chair



ACC PRAYER CHAIN

If you have a prayer request and would like members of our community to support you in prayer, contact the four key persons – if possible by SMS - and they will inform the others from the prayer chain:



| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Erwin Kinsey | 0754480184 |
| Margaret Kenyi | 0754090078 |
| Susan Simonson | 0754266559 |
| Stella Karumuna | 0754281337 |



An ACC Report from far afield:

A week after the Coronavirus arrived in Arusha, in the space of a few hours, my family went from making plans for an extended stay at home in Njiro, to a 3 am search for a flight back to our passport country. Our emotional and logistical change of direction felt like a bad case of whiplash. Within five days, we were boarding a plane for Washington, D.C.

Like many other sudden, unwilling evacuees from our ACC international community, we arrived back to our northern country at the grim, grey tail end of winter. We shivered in our borrowed accommodations in the woods. The lifeless, leafless brown forest around us suited the state of my heart. I wanted time to stop. I needed time to catch up with the feelings of the invisible trauma of evacuation, deal with the accompanying guilt to have left friends and colleagues in the lurch, understand the mixture of grief and relief and numbness.

Before our two-week quarantine was up, the grass had greened. The buds of maple trees began to explode in tiny red fireworks of leaves and helicopter seed pods. Violets burst out of the rainy mud. There was a day where we had to tie our jackets around our waists as we walked. Spring was coming. In the years when I waited out a long winter, I had always loved spring. This year, I resented it. I wanted to push spring back into the earth. How dare there be joy and new life in this season of suffering! I needed a little more time to adjust, to restore the balance of my disoriented heart.

But the Lord of life commands new life to spring forth out of darkness, out of death, out of bleak and barren branches. Creation was obedient to her Lord. My stony heart could not block this unstoppable change in season. There is something glorious about the way that Resurrection Sunday in the north so often coincides with the wide-open blooms of deepest red tulips. A trio of young foxes tumbled out of their hole and into the open, where we spotted them cavorting with their mother. All joy had been unleashed. Spring itself, the work of our faithful Creator, rolled the stone away from my heart.

All of us at ACC have been displaced physically from our church community, displaced from physical contact with dear friends and family, displaced from support structures and jobs and the ability to plan *anything*. Many of our foreign members have been temporarily – even permanently – displaced from our homes. It has been a hard season at this close of Lent. On whatever shore you have washed up after this storm, keep seeking out the signs of God's resurrection power. Ask for faith to recognize the Risen Lord in whatever guise He comes to you, the humility to accept the healing of his wounded hands, and the courage to follow Him in joy.

Grace and peace, Rebecca Mosley

Letter from Erwin Kinsey: Longings

Dear ACC friends,

We have a meditation from one of our members who was evacuated quite suddenly to the USA last month as the pandemic started, who has many reservations about leaving and longings to be back here. It has been suggested that I provide a testimony from someone who stayed behind. My thoughts go in many different directions: we suffer a sense of loss of those who have departed, we sense anxiety about whether any needed medical services will be available or sufficient here. Are we being irresponsible to stay - and now no more flights out? We are praying for the pandemic to somehow pass over and not touch Africa, but it is here. We fear for those who live hand-to-mouth, whose livelihoods are on hold, who have no capacity to bear through this crisis, those who are falling sick, those who are taking no precautions, those who will die without the hope we share in Christ. We sense a strong force to continue to interact with our good friends, especially with brothers and sisters in Christ, and not isolate ourselves as we elders have been advised to do. We are keeping distant from our granddaughters, as advised by our sons, but they are one of our greatest joys for being here.

We are tossed by different emotions such as fear and anxiety, but balanced by the trust and peace we obtain from God's Word "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; let not your hearts be troubled (John 14:27), I have overcome the world. (John 16:33) ...and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt 28:20b) "... to live is Christ, to die is gain." (Phil.1:21). This is a time of great uncertainty, and which way will I allow my thoughts to wander? It is an opportunity to trust God more and more. I find myself often singing quietly the great hymn of St. Patrick, "I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity, by invocation of the same, the Three in One and One in Three....: Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me..." No, I shall not fear in hard times, "...even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..."(Ps.23:4).

My grandmother told us stories of when she was young, there being times in winter when it was too cold, and the snow too deep, to take the horses and whole family of 8 children the 8 miles down the mountain to church. They lived on the highest farmed land in New England where temperatures got down to minus 40 degrees. So they would stay home and read the Bible, sing hymns and have their own devotions, sometimes listening later to the radio. She told briefly of influenzas which took lives; polio and smallpox which maimed and caused great sadness before antibiotics and vaccines were known, but I cannot remember her ever telling us about the great pandemic of 1919. I recently heard a recording of someone who remembered that event now 101 years ago, tell of the start of that epidemic in Kansas, USA which spread worldwide and killed millions. He recalled how it took lives so fast and touched so many families that it was three years later in 1922 before people were brave enough to go again to church or to congregate in town. My wife's Dad, now 99 years of age, tells of being in a prisoner of war camp from 1945-1947 in Morocco where the prisoners held Sunday services among themselves and worshipped with great earnestness and longing to return home.

The longing and sadness of isolation may seem new to us, but it is part of the human experience. We cannot know how this journey will end, but we are all on a journey separated somehow but together in another sense, in a totally new territory. We may not know where it extends, nor find the way to return to the old normal we have always known since we were born. We know Who holds the future. I will keep with God a short account of my sins; meditate on the hope I find in His Word during this and for all time; hold onto His promises, pray for those I am anxious for, give to those I can and pray for those whom I cannot carry; be a blessing of helpfulness to those I can reach out to from my gate, my phone, my WhatsApp, by MPESA to support ACC to continue its ministry of helpfulness; be thankful to God for all things, for causing me to rely more on Him than before; get back into His Word...hold fast to the name of Jesus.

Erwin Kinsey



Check out our Facebook page:
"Arusha Community Church" for updates and news.
You can add your words of encouragement in the
comments section. Tupo Pamoja!

Communications at ACC:



Updates on the situation at ACC are given through emails; with the same information posted on our website acc.or.tz, on the ACC Facebook page and through our ACC WhatsApp group. If you wish to also receive ACC updates through WhatsApp, please click on the link below and you will be added to the group. Only the administrators can post on this. For those who want to keep their contacts private, please change your privacy settings on your phone, as you cannot do that in the group. <https://chat.whatsapp.com/Hsgx0VqthgbJNF8Y993tWa>.

You can always contact the **ACC office** using arushacommunitychurch.office@gmail.com if you have any questions or concerns. Prayer requests can also be sent to this address and it will be forwarded to the Evangelism and Outreach Committee who have a Prayer Team in place during this time.

Your **offerings and tithes** can continue to be given through the MPESA number below, and are very much appreciated. **ACC MPESA** number +255 755 992 394 in the name of Nasieku Mollel (ACC Administrator's last name)

PBC (Projects and Benevolence Committee) continue to receive and review requests through ACC congregational members; though they are shepherding the funds carefully during this time.

ACC was also able to provide funding for assist with the purchase of cloth to make Personal Protective Gowns for ALMC. Margaret Kenyi is coordinating a team of tailors to sew these.

The ACC Worship Committee is organizing worship leaders to prepare a weekly service which is sent out by email and social media. Wonderful feedback stories have been received of people using these at home or outside with just 2 or 3 people; using them on Skype with scattered family members.

If you have a home worship story that you would like to share with the Worship Committee, please just write to the ACC office address, arushacommunitychurch.office@gmail.com and it will be forwarded to them.



Many ask how my mother-in-law, Eunie Simonson is doing, as they miss seeing her smiling face. She is doing wonderfully as she approaches her 90th birthday in July. Eunie was a founding member of ACC and so anyone who has attended ACC since then can attest to her love of God and faith in Christ her Lord. She is enjoying staying in seclusion with family members down at the beach.

~ From Council.

ACC Bank Details:

For anyone who wishes or needs to transfer funds to ACC please find the following details here:

EXIM BANK

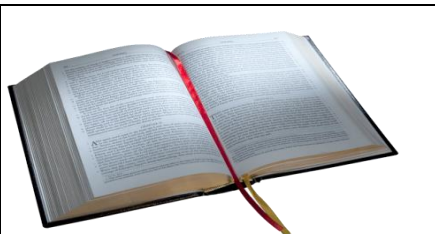
TSH. ACCOUNT NUMBER 00 300 23 252

USD ACCOUNT NUMBER 578 067 0116



Mission Statement:

Arusha Community Church seeks to bring Christian praise and witness to God through worship, service and study. The congregation provides opportunity for Christian fellowship, service and witness, community outreach, personal growth and family growth. Recognizing the close link between worship and culture, Arusha Community Church has an inter-denominational ministry to the international community in Arusha.



MAY - SCRIPTURE READINGS

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| <p>MAY 3 FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</p> | <p>Acts 2:42-47 Psalm 23 1 Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10</p> |
| <p>MAY 10 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</p> | <p>Acts 7:55-60 Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 1 Peter 2:2-10 John 14:1-14</p> |
| <p>MAY 17 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</p> | <p>Acts 17:22-31 Psalm 66:8-20 1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21</p> |
| <p>MAY 24 SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</p> | <p>Acts 1:6-14 Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 John 17:1-11</p> |
| <p>MAY 31 DAY OF PENTECOST</p> | <p>Acts 2:1-21 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 John 20:19-23</p> |

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

- John 16:33