

Glad Tidings

PO Box 2316, Arusha, Tanzania
www.acc.or.tz

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Arusha
Community
Church

Letter from Council.

When British adventurer Bear Grylls ran his famous “Running Wild: Bear Grylls Obama” episode in the Alaskan wilderness back in 2015, the sight of the two powerhouses-in-their-field praying together was a joy to behold. Both men attribute their faith to their success and continue to draw on it daily. They discussed faith extensively throughout the show: Obama noting that faith helps him keep an even keel, and Grylls concluding at one point that “*there are no atheists in the Southern Ocean, or in the death zone on Everest*”, two places with which he is familiar and which had surely strengthened his faith.

It is often said that trying times create or strengthen faith; that those who suffer look to the Lord and that post-Christian societies are born largely out of increasing prosperity, affluence and security, causing people to feel that they don’t need God, and they don’t need the church. Indeed, we are seeing this reflected in numerous western nations at present. But challenging circumstances can also lead people to question their faith at times. They can lead people to question God. To fail to see the bigger picture. Great is the mystery of faith!

The last few weeks, whilst being a very different proposition to the Southern Ocean or the Everest death zone, have been a real test of faith for many of us. It has been easy to worry, easy to question, easy to lose our spiritual focus and, with the closure of ACC, easy to lose touch with God. I think it’s fair to say that many of us have experienced some or all of these emotions over the past few weeks and months (to a greater or lesser degree) but I am mindful that there does seem to be a resurgence in prayer. There are many people I know who are returning to their faith, seeing prayer through rejuvenated eyes as a necessary and useful approach to the current challenges in the world. I might conclude, therefore, that “there are no atheists in a COVID-19 zone”.

Churches are, of course, special places indeed. And Arusha Community Church is a particularly special environment for the many congregants reading this. For a Christian, getting up on Sunday and knowing that we are going to church is comforting. The familiar faces, buildings and routines (within reason as we know ACC services are different each week) are solid ground amongst the sinking sand of the wider world. We cling to this rock as children to a parent: survival in the death zone, an anchor in the Southern Ocean.

Whilst these feelings are perfectly natural for us as human beings, they should give us pause for thought nevertheless. It is clearly written in Matthew 18:20 that “*where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them*”. Church is, therefore, a place where God is well and truly in our midst, but we must never forget that God is always with us, whether or not we are in a physical church building. We do not need a building to bring us closer to God, and this is why the home worship services which the ACC worship committee have been sending out are so useful and important. But we can take it even further: it is not even necessary to be in a group of two or three to connect with God. References to this are liberally scattered across the bible, such as in Jeremiah 29:12-13 “*Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.*” When we pray, God hears us. It doesn’t matter where we are or who we are with. He hears us and that’s all we need to know.

Of course, in spite of everything, we still long for our anchor. It’s human nature. We don’t like change and we’re creatures of habit. And one day we will get it. ACC will open again and we will unite again in the joy and unity of Christ. It will be a joyous day and we will feel complete. There is no shame in this; so much good is done globally by churches and locally by ACC in particular, even during this recent season. So much love and positive Christian energy is generated by all churches and we will rightfully rejoice when the day comes.

But let’s not forget that our Christianity is more than a building. Let’s not lose our connection to God simply because our church is not open physically. And let’s not be Sunday Christians.

Michael Murray – ACC COUNCIL SECRETARY

A note from Susan Simonson, Council Chair

As the weeks pass, people may wonder when ACC will open again. The answer is yet unknown; and the congregation will certainly be informed when we move toward that time. While the global pandemic continues world-wide, ACC Council will also still need to consider our congregational requirements for health protection. There will be a need for a 'bridging' time, with preventative measures in place, before returning to 'normal'. Again, as these are developed by Council, you will be informed.



REFLECTIONS FROM QUARANTINE

My earliest childhood memories of "church" are not what you might expect. They are not of Sunday School class, nor of hard pews, nor even the briefest hint of my baptism at the age of five. They are a vague fog of warmth; having to do with good meals, kind faces, interested voices and soft couches. When my brother and I were very young, my parents were youth leaders at our church. They could not afford the child care necessary for us to stay at home while they proceeded with their ministry. So one night every week, Dave and I were trundled off to yet another church member's house for dinner and bedtime and picked up much later, asleep in our pajamas. I saw the church families far more often than my own relatives. I grew up thinking that was how church was: a big family with lots of different houses.

Unfortunately, it didn't stay that way. Because of theological disagreements, our family changed churches multiple times during my growing up years. The worst disagreement, I still think, had less to do with theology, and more to do with personal power, and resulted in having to move 350 km away to a new town, as our family had been blacklisted by the Christian community in the previous. As an adult, I continued the habit of changing churches, for reasons of education, requiring moves to new cities.

I realized this evening, while writing this piece, that I have now attended Arusha Community Church for longer than any other church in my life. It is also the first church that I have chosen to be a member of. I knew from the very start that there was something special about ACC. What started it for me was when Mark Jacobson asked me to help him with sung communion on Easter Sunday, 2013. I was holding the Cup, and looking over the congregation as they sang back, "Allelulia!" in thunderous unison. I realized then that there were representatives from every race and continent in the congregation that morning. The hair rose on the back of my neck and I had a hard time keeping the tears from my own voice as I wondered: "this is a preview of heaven" (thinking of Revelation 7:9-17). It has continued to be great joy to join in worship across theological and cultural lines. I think of singing Revivalist hymns in an Ash Wednesday service or doing an Anabaptist style foot washing service with a Catholic preacher who spoke positively about Martin Luther. I think of the many languages sung at Christmas.

However, my recent illness has highlighted for me that indeed what we do on Sunday is only the face of who we are as ACC, a local Body of Christ. Now that face is masked, hidden and separated. But the Body continues its most important work, to be the hands and feet of Christ to one another and the outside world. When people asked me if I had enough support to get me through illness and quarantine, it was easy to answer that "my church is being the Church". Heartfelt thanks for all the WhatsApps and phone calls and emails, and offers "to get me anything". Truly, you are being the hands and voice of Christ to me.

There is great and deep joy in being a part of this particular family of God as we try to follow Paul's advice in Galatians 6, especially during this time when we are not meeting together. *Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.*

Following this, we can really be the church of my childhood imagination: a big family with lots of different houses.

~ Wendy Willmore .

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	0754 480 184
Margaret Kenyi	0754 090 078
Stella Karumuna	0754 266 559
Susan Simonson	0754 281 337

“Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our
Maker.” ~Psalm 95:6

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Contacts:

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Cost: Kshs 1,000 Ugshs 40,000 RWF 10,000 TShs 22,000

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To register for this Online Class starting in **July**, fill this application form and someone will get into contact with you.
<https://forms.gle/wMupZwEZtwWGDR957>



ACC celebrates with Elirehema Wegard and his new wife, Rachel, who were married on June 6th in Ilboru. Elirehema is a faithful member of ACC and many will know his smiling face as a regular member of the ACC usher team. Please pray for Elirehema and Rachel as they begin their married life together.

Offerings at ACC

Thank you to the many who continue to give your offerings to ACC; the offerings in May were very generous. Please know that these offerings are needed and appreciated. Just a few days ago, we were again able to help our neighbor with funds to enhance the protection of both patients and staff. Asante sana.

Offerings can be given through **ACC MPESA number +255 755 992 394** in the name of Nasieku Mollel (ACC Administrator's last name). OR deposited directly into our **ACC EXIM account number: 0030023252**



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.

Worship Committee during Covid 19

When Covid 19 hit our country Tanzania in March we were hit like a bolt wondering how we were going to function as a committee of nine people for the benefit of our ACC members.

Part of our responsibility in the worship committee is to plan leaders and preachers for all our services. Despite the closing of our church to the public for worship we still felt a great need to serve our members with a meaningful service every week.

Three months later and we are continuing to function as a committee and have been meeting every month in members houses practising social distancing to continue with our responsibilities.

Our members have worked extremely well together sharing the workload between us and enjoying the hospitality of our hosts.

It has been a wonderful experience to contact both preachers and leaders, some being in different countries during this time but all with a spirit of saying yes to our requests and as a result we have been able to continue providing a service each week through various media.

With the amazing cooperation we have experienced our plan is to continue as we presently function for the foreseeable future until worshiping can return to the church once again. We hope and pray that this will come sooner rather than later when we can be together in person.

JULY'S AT HOME SERVICES: Leaders and Preachers

	July 5	July 12	July 19	July 26
Church Calendar	Proper 9 (14) Fifth Sunday after Pentecost	Proper 10 (15) Sixth Sunday after Pentecost	Proper 11 (16) Seventh Sunday after Pentecost	Proper 12 (17) Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Service Type	Communion Service	Morning Service	Communion Service	Family Service
Service Leader	Jessica Paul	Moira Brehony	Philip Mvungi	Rebecca Mosley
Preacher	Rebecca Mosley	Daudi Mmsemmaa	Erwin Kinsey	Vance
Scripture Readings	Zechariah 9:9-12 Psalm 145:8-14 Romans 7:15-25a Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30	Isaiah 55:10-13 Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13 Romans 8:1-11 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23	Isaiah 44:6-8 Psalm 86:11-17 Romans 8:12-25 Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43	1 Kings 3:5-12 Psalm 119:129-136 Romans 8:26-39 Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

~ 1Thessalonians 5:11



Check out our Facebook page: **“Arusha Community Church”** for updates and news. You can Add your words of encouragement in the comment section. Tuko Pamoja!