



Bethesda Shighatini



March 2007
Bethesda Lutheran Church
Ames, Iowa

Meet Pastor Walter and Christine From Shighatini Lutheran, Our Sister Congregation in Tanzania

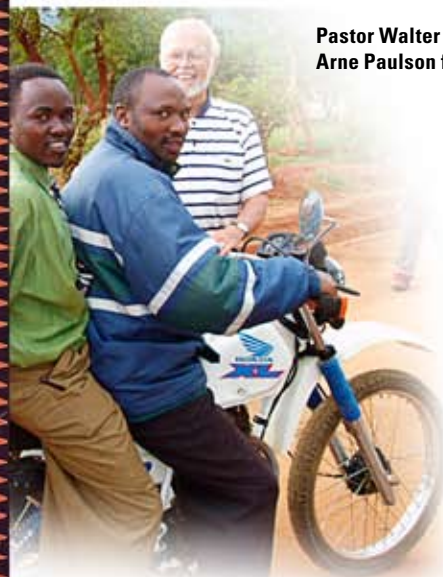


Pastor Walter Msangi (pronounced mmm-SAHNG-ee) is fairly new to the ministry.

At age 30, he left teaching at a government primary school and went to Makumira Theological College, sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. He was ordained four years later in 1995, and served another parish until 2004 when he was transferred to Shighatini.

Pastor Walter and Christine actually live in Usangi, a somewhat larger community than the village of Shighatini.

They stayed in Usangi with their five children because that is where Christine had a job as a secondary teacher. Usangi is considered fairly close to Shighatini, although it's a 30-minute ride by motorbike, or about a two-hour walk.



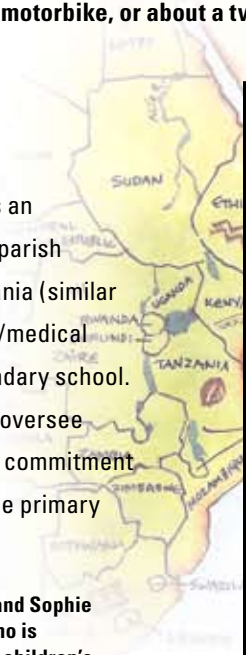
Pastor Walter and Philip are on the motorbike.
Arne Paulson from Bethesda is in the background.

Pastor Walter has a staff that includes an evangelist, secretary-treasurer and a parish worker. The Lutheran diocese in Tanzania (similar to our synod) operates the dispensary/medical facility in Shighatini as well as a secondary school. Pastor Walter chairs both boards that oversee these institutions. He also maintains a commitment to teaching as religion instructor for the primary and secondary schools.

Pastor Walter and Sophie Livingstone, who is responsible for children's Sunday School.



In addition to serving the parish, he was elected district pastor by his fellow pastors in 2002. As district pastor, he is required to regularly visit 12 other parishes in the district and counsel new pastors. The job also requires a motorcycle for transportation (but no reimbursement for maintenance and fuel) and good time management skills to fulfill the duties of his home parish. Pastor Walter was elected to a second four-year term as district pastor in 2006.



The Shighatini parish has 3,250 members, although some no longer live in the area. Most members are subsistence farmers, who are greatly affected by varying levels of rainfall on the drier western slopes of the North Pare Mountains. About one-third of the parishioners provide in-kind offerings (beans, chickens, sugar cane), which are sold in an auction considered part of the Sunday worship service.



Pastor Walter is pastoral representative to the Diocese Women and Children Committee. He has been very active in facilitating the Binti-Mama (daughter-mother in Swahili) program for the district.

Pastor Walter has worked hard to ensure that the relationship with Bethesda benefits his parish and the village. Bethesda groups that have visited Shighatini always note Pastor Walter's generous hospitality. He arrives by 8 a.m. to eat breakfast with them, makes sure they have guides and interpreters, and returns at the end of the day, leaving in the dark to drive his motorcycle home on the bumpy dirt road to Usangi. It is obvious that Pastor Walter cares deeply about the well-being of his congregation.



Christine leads an equally busy life. She has been a headmistress in a church secondary school in Usangi, and taught chemistry, biology and vocational agriculture in the government secondary school.

In 2005, she decided to go back to school to learn how to improve the economic status of communities such as Usangi and Shighatini.

She enrolled in Mzumbe University near Morogoro, about 100 miles away. She is in her second year at the Entrepreneurial Development Center, with an emphasis on entrepreneurial activities for women.

Pastor Walter and Christine have three daughters: Dorcas, 11, Viola, 8 (both will celebrate birthdays while their parents are gone), and Angela, 6; and two sons: Yohanna, 10, and Jeremiah, 3.

Bethesda is blessed to have Pastor Walter and Christine as part of our sister congregation and doing God's work in Tanzania!

Deepening our relationship: Pastor Walter and Christine's visit to Bethesda

Partnerships begin with people, and there could be no better way to build our relationship with the Shighatini Lutheran parish in northern Tanzania than to welcome their pastor and his wife to Ames.

Pastor Walter Msangi and his wife, Christine, have been gracious hosts to several groups from Bethesda Lutheran and now we can return the hospitality! They will be in Iowa for almost three weeks, approximately March 28 to April 17.



Ginny Anderson, upper left, and Eileen Klonglan from Bethesda with Christine

Pastor Walter will participate in worship services on Palm Sunday weekend (March 31-April 1), during Holy Week and on Easter Sunday (April 8), and he will preach at all worship services April 14-15.

Other opportunities to get to know Pastor Walter and Christine:

- **Informal discussion, 9:30-10:30 a.m., April 1, April 8 and April 15**
- **Wednesday fellowship and lunch, 11:30 a.m., April 4 (notify church office @ 232-6256*0 if you plan to stay for the meal)**

They'll also meet (either together or separately) with Sunday School classes, our children's choirs, the Bethesda quilters, Super Wednesday students, as well as other boards at Bethesda and synod leadership. And of course, several "safari" trips are planned to areas of special interest to Pastor Walter and Christine.

We pray for God's blessings on Pastor Walter and Christine's visit—that new relationships may begin while others are strengthened for God's service.