

Bega Kwa Bega (shoulder-to-shoulder)

Bega Kwa Bega is a St Paul Area Synod program that matches churches with parishes in the Iringa, Tanzania Diocese. First Lutheran of Rush City is and has been matched up with parishes of Kitowo, a smaller town about 51.6 km (32 miles) from the large city of Iringa. There are a few congregations in the Kitowo area (much like the Tri-United parish) and First Lutheran has been their partner in ministry for several years. In other words, we have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with them.

We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with one another in prayers, projects, and presence.

As a congregation, we can lift our brothers and sisters in Kitowo in prayer, not only in church, but in our daily prayer life. In projects, our congregation recently raised more than \$5,000 to build the roof of the new church building in Kitowo. What a wonderful response from our people to our companion church! Every year, we sent funds to support students, who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend school. Such a common expectation in our society but such a privilege in places like Tanzania.

We have been present with our partners in the past. Throughout the years, Bev Anderson, Brenda Taylor, myself, and others have traveled to Kitowo. All of us came away with a great understanding and appreciation of the people and God's work in Kitowo. There is opportunity in the future to meet our partners over Zoom or to arrange visits across the ocean.

We would like to reignite our relationship with the people of our partner congregation in Kitowo. It's a good time to reintroduce ourselves to them and for us to get to know them. We are going to start a letter-writing project every 3rd Sunday of the month. We will each write notes to our friends to give them a picture of life in Rush City and to ask them about what life looks like in Kitowo.

Join us this Sunday as we gather in the fellowship hall and share brief messages with our friends in Kitowo of the things that keep us busy everyday and ask them what life in their small town looks like. They will enjoy hearing from us!