

CHRIST, COMPASSION AND CHRISTMAS

Blessed Christmas to you all!

I gave a chapel talk recently at our morning devotions at Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre. I spoke to the idea that our ministry is really a sharing of the compassion of Christ with our patients and with each other. Compassion comes from the Latin words: "*passio*" for suffering and "*cum*" meaning together. Thus, sharing the suffering. As I searched the scriptures for stories of the healings of Christ, I was struck by how almost every account of Christ's healings included the word compassion. "He had compassion on him..... He was moved by compassion.....He felt compassion." Christ, the very image of God, shows us that God is truly a compassionate God.

At Christmas time we remember the greatest act of compassion possible. God felt compassion for a broken, separated and hurting world, God felt compassion and reached out to heal us through the gift of Jesus, born to bring about the healing of our very creational relationship with God the Father. Christmas, the celebration of God's compassion for us all.



MISSION OF COMPASSION

The many ministries of compassion continue at ALMC as well. Our surgeries for crippled children now number in the hundreds each year. The outreach to women with obstetric fistula is growing too, especially with the addition of a special surgeon coming to direct this program from Ethiopia. Amazing new ministries for helping children with spina bifida and hydrocephalus have begun. And the painful, yet sadly necessary, Sexual Abuse and Rape Care is serving those in need.

The needs are great, yet as the faithful in Christ, together we continue to share the compassion of Christ. Together, we are Christ, sharing in the suffering and in the hope of those whom we serve together in Tanzania.



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND GOD BLESS!

Mark and Linda Jacobson