

BEGA KWA BEGA



TRAVELING TO IRINGA THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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Definition of General Terms

Affiliate Partners (Affiliates): Independent organizations that engage in specific development work within the Iringa Diocese; have agreed to work within the BKB Mission, Vision and Values statement; and make a financial commitment toward the support of BKB infrastructure.

BKB: Bega Kwa Bega Companion Synod Relationship

BKB-DIRA: Office of the Iringa Diocese that coordinates BKB activities

BKB-SPAS: Office of the Saint Paul Area Synod that coordinates BKB activities

Clusters: Groupings of congregations involved in Bega Kwa Bega partnerships, aligned with synod conferences, for the purposes of networking and administration.

Cluster Coordinators/Leaders: Volunteers who assist in disseminating information to congregations and who gather congregational representatives twice yearly for informational meetings.

Cluster Representatives: Individuals selected by congregational clusters and appointed by the Synod Council as voting members of the Iringa Committee.

DIRA: Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (Dayosisi ya Iringa in Kiswahili)

ELCA: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ELCT: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

Iringa Committee: The governing body for this companion synod relationship, which is accountable to the Saint Paul Area Synod Council and has the function of providing oversight and coordination of the synod's Bega Kwa Bega partnership with the Iringa Diocese in Tanzania in collaboration and consultation with the bishop and the director of Bega Kwa Bega.

SPAS: Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Description of BKB Travel Planning Roles

BKB-DIRA & BKB-SPAS: Work with Travel Coordinators to make arrangements for visitors. Upon arrival, they serve as primary hosts

Cluster Leaders: Available to help Group Leaders with initial trip visioning and can link them with other groups who have recently traveled or are planning to do so

Group Leader: Designated individual who assumes primary responsibility for trip planning as well as the safety, health, and well-being of their travelers

Program Coordinator: Serves as primary host on behalf of BKB-SPAS, assisting Group Leaders with orientation, making payments, navigating relationships, and emergency response

SPAS Office: Receives initial travel inquiries, required paperwork, and payments

Travel Coordinators: Assist groups with making reservations in Iringa

History of Bega Kwa Bega

Bega Kwa Bega is the name of the Saint Paul Area Synod's companion synod relationship with the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Bega Kwa Bega—"shoulder to shoulder" in Swahili—describes both the model of accompaniment with the Iringa Diocese and the umbrella name under which a variety of programmatic efforts are carried out.

Officially begun in 1987 as a synod to synod program with a primary focus on educating pastors for the rapidly growing Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, the Bega Kwa Bega companion relationship with the Iringa Diocese has evolved into a grassroots movement in which congregations in the Saint Paul Area Synod are matched with congregations in the Iringa Diocese, making possible mutual efforts and creative initiatives that flow out of the vitality of the relationships established over the years.

The companion synod relationship between the Saint Paul Area Synod and the Iringa Diocese is by far the largest such partnership anywhere in the ELCA. When the partnership began, two congregations were involved; today the partnership includes more than 65 congregations and a variety of affiliated ministries that address urgent needs in Tanzania. To date, we have channeled more than \$10 million to Iringa, and in recent years have directed more than \$1 million annually.

Thousands of visitors from the Saint Paul Area Synod have visited Iringa, with more than half of those since the congregation partnerships began in 2000. More than 60 have traveled to this synod from Iringa, including the Iringa Choir, which toured the area and performed concerts in congregations. These visits have strengthened and cemented relationships with partner parishes by enabling visitors to understand the culture, faith, and lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ living in Iringa.

Throughout much of its history, the partnership was overseen by an informal Task Force composed of rostered and lay leaders from across the Saint Paul Area Synod with programmatic responsibilities carried out by a team of volunteers. Acknowledging the increased scale and complexity of the partnership, at the direction of the Saint Paul Area Synod council plans were made beginning in 2012 to formalize the governance and operations of BKB-SPAS. These efforts culminated in the formation of the Iringa Committee, accountable to the Synod Council, and the hiring of a Director in autumn of 2013. These structural changes were implemented with the hope of ensuring the long-term stability and sustainability of this ministry for many years to come.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Joint Statement (2008)

Signed in 2008, this statement was created in collaboration between the Saint Paul Area Synod and Iringa Diocese. It provides the overall framework of the companion synod relationship.

God has granted the people of the Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the people of the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania a partnership founded in the Christian mandate of witnessing, fellowship and unity, mutuality in service and equitable sharing in stewardship and God-given gifts.

In Jesus Christ we have been bound together with the chords of love. As brothers and sisters we walk together, not ahead or behind, but side by side, shoulder to shoulder, hence entrusting ourselves to the Bega Kwa Bega philosophy in which we believe that we will always and only be successful in being in need with each other to fulfill our desire of being together in God's mission.

Together we will strive to coordinate exchange programs that will be at the levels of church to church, congregation to congregation, institution to institution, and people to people. We will encourage connections and travels through which people can meet face to face and faith to faith. We seek to maintain clear and regular communication between partners and we value the diversity of gifts with which the Holy Spirit has blessed us as the Body of Christ. Above all else we seek the guidance of the Spirit for the sake of God's mission and the promotion of the common good.

Mission: (Why we are here)

Bega Kwa Bega is a joint ministry representing communities of faith whose core purpose is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, extend Christian hospitality, and promote healthy interpersonal relationships through prayer, worship, and service.

Vision: (Where we are headed)

Led by the Spirit for the sake of relationship, we pledge to promote growth in faith and life and preserve the unity and diversity of God's mission among us.

Values: (Reflections of who we are at our best, the core beliefs that guide our actions)

- **Integrity:** openness and honesty are the hallmarks of our words and actions
- **Respect:** aware of our cultural differences and bearing in mind that people from both sides become guests of each other at given and varied times, we embrace and value diversity
- **Interdependence:** we seek to strengthen local ministries and leadership on both sides by helping the local communities to achieve their goals
- **Sustainability:** we encourage a spirit of Biblical stewardship, the spirit of self-reliance and the ownership of any rendered service by the local communities

- **Compliance:** we adhere to principles and systems mutually agreed upon in order to protect and sustain this relationship, continually remembering that whoever participates in the exchange of visits, for whatever purpose, bears the identity of these two bodies—the ELCT-Iringa Diocese and the ELCA-Saint Paul Area Synod—and is seen as their representative

BKB-SPAS Specific Statements (2015)

At the direction of the Saint Paul Area Synod council, in September 2013 the Iringa Committee was instructed to clarify the core tenets and work of the relationship between SPAS and DIRA. The following statements describe how BKB-SPAS lives into the Joint Statements of 2008.

The Mission of BKB-SPAS (Who we are and why we are here)

Bega Kwa Bega is a joint ministry between the Iringa Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the Saint Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America representing communities of faith whose core purpose is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to extend Christian hospitality, and to strengthen one another through the shared practices of prayer, presence, and projects.

In brief, then: Bega Kwa Bega is a network of relationships: holy, growing, and thriving. Through it we walk beside our companions in Iringa, celebrating our life together through mutual prayer, presence, and projects.

The Vision of BKB-SPAS (Where we are heading)

Led by the Spirit, we envision deeper faith and fuller life, accompanying one another as participants in God’s ongoing mission in both America and Tanzania.

The Values of BKB-SPAS (How we strive to act and to be)

These accompaniment values come to us from the theological, missiological, and ethical reflections of the Global Mission unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This specific text is copied from ‘Accompaniment,’ a handbook created for 2013 ‘Glocal Mission Gatherings.’

Mutuality: In accompaniment, we work to build up our capacities to proclaim and live out the Gospel of Christ. We work to recognize that all of us have gifts to offer to God’s mission, and to value gifts of all, while caring for one another’s needs. Mutuality is built upon giving and receiving trust as we grow together.

Inclusivity: God calls us to include everyone in the mission of reconciliation, yet we know that all communities exclude someone. In accompanying one another, we look to see who is excluded, and why, and commit to change community structures and habits that can exclude people without any deliberate intention. For those who experience exclusion, as well as for those who are “inside,” it takes great effort and courage to continue to attempt to build relationships across boundaries. Inclusivity requires self-reflection and honesty about our own communities and relationships.

Vulnerability: Vulnerability and Empowerment taken together are an important key to accompaniment in God’s mission. In our culture, vulnerability often seems

to be weakness, but Jesus shows us that vulnerability – openness to relationship, giving up power – is God’s way of redemption. We enter God’s mission through vulnerability, just as Jesus became vulnerable to us and with us.

Empowerment: As we accompany one another, we struggle to recognize and name power as it affects our relationships. When we recognize that relationships have asymmetries of power, and struggle to balance and correct those asymmetries, we are working to Empower ourselves and one another. Learning to let go of power – to become Vulnerable – is an act of empowerment, as is recognizing and standing up to power that hobbles people in their walk through life.

Sustainability: Often we imagine our relationships as simple and self-sustaining. In fact, relationships are complex, and connected to other relationships and commitments, and require much attention over time to sustain. The Accompaniment Value of Sustainability means that we recognize that any given relationship will require an intentional commitment of attention and time to build up all those who are involved. In a mission project context, sustainability means embedding the project or work in the community as a whole, so that the project doesn’t depend only on one or two people, and can continue over time.

Why Travel? The Three Pillars of Bega Kwa Bega

The practice of being present is the second pillar of our relationship with the Iringa Diocese. We grow closer to God and one another through the intentional exchange of people, stories, and shared experiences across continents and cultures. Wherever two or more are gathered in Christ's name, we profess, there Christ is. Travel, therefore, is an integral part of our life together.

For the majority of those who make the journey, traveling to Tanzania and spending time with our companions in Iringa is a life changing experience. Facilitated by the Saint Paul Area Synod and partner congregations or organizations, these trips are not 'mission trips' in the classic sense of going and doing things for overseas partners. Rather their focus is on *building relationships* between communities of faith and *deepening understandings* of the global sweep of God's mission and our roles as co-participants in it. More than tourists, they are ambassadors.

One Among Many: When individuals travel through Bega Kwa Bega they don't do so alone. Whether they are going solo or with a large delegation, they join a stream of guests and enter a network of relationships that began before them and will carry on after them – adding their voice and actions to those of many.

Our desire to be present with one another flows from the prayerful concern we have for one another. The practice of prayer, then, is the first pillar of Bega Kwa Bega. If you ask our companions in Iringa, it is actually the most important practice that we share. Prayer shapes the heart and soul of our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Tanzania. Across the Iringa Diocese, most individual congregations pray for their companions on a weekly basis. Saint Paul Area Synod congregations can reciprocate by including prayer petitions for their companions into their weekly liturgy. Prayers can be for the general welfare of the parish or for specific individuals or special concerns that arise throughout the year.

Linking Prayer Partners: Several SPAS congregations have begun exchanging names and pictures of congregation members or families with their companions in Iringa and agree to pray for one another on a daily basis. Using travel groups to do so has linked hundreds of people to one another in a shared spiritual practice.

Undertaken together, projects are the third pillar of our relationship with the Iringa Diocese. Working with one another to achieve shared goals is fundamental to building and strengthening relationships between individuals and communities. Through Bega Kwa Bega companion congregations have pursued a variety of initiatives, all with an eye to proclaiming God's presence in both word and deed. From the construction of a university and secondary school student sponsorships to healthcare and economic development, Saint Paul Area Synod congregations have pursued a variety of projects with their companions, all with an eye to proclaiming God's presence in both word and deed

Witness to the Work: Travelers have the opportunity to witness the work of this relationship first-hand. From visiting hospitals to meeting with sponsored students, they are uniquely positioned to take reports of what they have seen and heard back home.

What's the what? Clarifying Your Purpose

With more than sixty different congregation to congregation pairings, nearly a dozen affiliated organizations, and a handful of colleges, universities, and other groups traveling through Bega Kwa Bega, each delegation arrives in town with its own aim and intent. True to the grassroots nature of this relationship, there is no one-size-fits-all itinerary. Apart from a few set pieces, like the welcome and debrief with the Program Coordinator or the orientation session with BKB-DIRA, your time in Iringa is like a choose-your-own-adventure story that you and your companions write together.

To make the most of your journey, it is best to spend considerable time on the question of what you want your trip to be about before jumping to what, exactly, you want to do. Put another way, the clearer you are about the *purpose* of your visit the better the planning will go and the more impactful your journey will be. This is where conversations with Cluster Leaders, other veteran travelers, and your companions can be really helpful.

Different purposes will lead to different styles of trips. For example:

- **General Overview** – Introduce participants to the BKB relationship at large as well as your specific relationship with your companions. Delegations make a point of visiting different DIRA institutions (schools, medical facilities, etc) to better understand the mission and vision of the ELCT. When visiting companion parishes, they will often include stops at each preaching point. These are the most common style of visit and the way the majority of visitors get to know the Iringa Diocese.
- **Project-specific** – A new roof has been put on a building, a well has been dug, and students are graduating... Project-specific trips focus their attention on work that American and Tanzanian companions are pursuing together and are often shorter in time. These are best suited for those who already understand the broader nature of the partnership and have some previous experience in-country.
- **Special Interest** – From youth and young adults to choirs and groups of teachers, doctors, and engineers, special interest visits enable people with similar interests or life experiences to connect with one another across cultures. While providing some overview of the work of the diocese and parish life, they devote more time to pursuing shared activities together. These require strong communication and solid working relationships between partners in order to be implemented best.
- **Immersion Experiences** – Veteran travelers and those with demonstrated cross-cultural experience and skill have immersed themselves in day-to-day life with their companions for several days. Best pursued in smaller groups (2-3 people max), these types of experience require proven working relationships and are enhanced by some familiarity with Swahili. Due to the intensity of the experience for both travelers and hosts, these types of experiences require conversation in advance with leaders from BKB-SPAS and BKB-DIRA before being approved.

PREPARING FOR TRAVEL – THE RESERVATION PROCESS

Groups wishing to travel to Iringa are directed to visit www.spas-elca.org/bkbtravel for updated travel planning resources. Cluster leaders may be consulted early on for advice and to look for opportunities to align travel plans with others. First time Group Leaders and those who haven't traveled in the past three years are expected to participate in a Travel Group Leader Training Session held periodically throughout the year.

When Group Leaders are prepared to begin booking their trip, they should complete the Initial Contact Form on the BKB Travel Page. This begins the travel reservation process:

- ❑ **SPAS Office** receives the initial contact form and replies with email outlining next steps.
- ❑ **Group Leader** submits roster, reservation form, and travel fees.
- ❑ **SPAS Office** replies with individual traveler forms, visa application instructions, and cover letters; then assigns Travel Coordinator.
- ❑ **Travel Coordinator** works with Group Leader, vendors, BKB-DIRA and BKB-SPAS to finalize the itinerary and make necessary in-country bookings. Program Coordinator assists as needed.
- ❑ **Group Leader** coordinates with travelers and an independent travel agent to secure flight reservations.
- ❑ No later than six weeks prior to departure, **Group Leader** submits completed individual traveler forms, covenant, and all travel money to the Synod Office.
- ❑ Within two weeks of departure, **Travel Coordinator** passes responsibility for the group to Program Coordinator.
- ❑ Days before arrival, **Program Coordinator** reconfirms flight information, ground transportation, and initial lodging with vendors. Daily itinerary is reviewed with BKB-DIRA.

IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT

When groups are in-country, BKB-SPAS provides support to Group Leaders and their delegations in a variety of ways.

Welcome and Safety Orientation: Upon arrival in Iringa, delegations are welcomed by the Program Coordinator at the Lutheran Center or other place of lodging. Travel stories are heard, concerns are flagged, and the schedule for the next couple of days is reviewed. Guests are reminded that they are representatives of BKB-SPAS and expected to conduct themselves accordingly. Tips for a successful stay at the Lutheran Center are shared (e.g. hot water switches and who to talk to if one needs assistance). A 'Staying Safe and Healthy' information sheet is distributed and discussed. Topics include petty crime, alcohol usage, male/female dynamics, hygiene, hydration, etc.

DIRA Introductions and Overview: Hospitality is important. So too is protocol. As the official local hosts, DIRA Leadership asks all delegations traveling through BKB to visit their head office in Iringa for introductions and an overview of the diocese, its work, and its mission. Typically, these occur early in any group's visit and help provide background information for groups visiting DIRA congregations, schools, and other institutions.

Emergency Response: Group Leaders assume primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of travelers in their delegation. The Program Coordinator and BKB-SPAS office are present to

provide a secondary level of support. Group Leaders should ensure that hardcopies of the Individual Traveler Forms for group members are always in a well-known, easily accessible location.

Group Phones: BKB-SPAS expects to be able to contact Group Leaders at a local Tanzanian number or at a US number activated in Tanzania. To assist with this, BKB-SPAS maintains simple, local cell phones for Group Leaders or their designees to carry for the duration of their time in-country. Phones are preloaded with key contacts for emergency use; groups may add other numbers as needed. Some groups may choose to put a local SIM card in their own phone instead; that number should be shared with BKB-SPAS.

Cash Withdrawals and Payments: The Program Coordinator works with the Group Leader (or their designee) to review funds in their travel account, assess upcoming needs, and develops a plan for cash withdrawals as needed. *See Money Matters for more information.*

Daily Support: When groups are in Iringa, the Program Coordinator checks in with the Group Leader and delegation members. This is an opportunity to review the schedule, inquire about travelers' overall health, troubleshoot concerns, and assist the group in processing their experience in light of the theory and practice of accompaniment. As schedules change or concerns arise, the Program Coordinator works with BKB-DIRA and others to adapt plans accordingly.

Confirming Visits: The Program Coordinator works with BKB-DIRA to make arrangements with certain institutions like UoI, Iringa Hope, or Huruma Center to schedule visits.

Learning Modules and Special Activities: If requested in advance, and as appropriate, the Program Coordinator will facilitate language classes, learning modules, and other special activities for travel delegations. These are designed to enhance cross-cultural awareness, facilitate experiential learning, and build familiarity with the theory and practice of accompaniment.

Debriefing and Departure: Prior to departing Iringa, the Program Coordinator gathers the delegation for a debriefing session designed to help travelers frame their experience in relational terms and equip them for telling their story as they return home. Notes are also made about items that need further follow-up (e.g. project commitments made to companions or questions that need to be resolved). An invitation is extended for continued engagement with BKB upon travelers' return to the United States.

SAMPLE ITINERARY – TWO WEEKS IN TANZANIA

Day 1 (Thursday) Depart Minneapolis/Saint Paul

Day 2 (Friday) Arrive Dar es Salaam. *Overnight at Wista's Inn.*

Day 3 (Saturday) Drive from Dar to Iringa. Watch the transition from the urban, coastal environment of Dar es Salaam to the agricultural setting of Iringa and the Southern Highlands. Drive through Mikumi National Park. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 4 (Sunday) Get Acclimated to Iringa. Worship at the Iringa Lutheran Cathedral. Stretch your legs by walking through the town's markets. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 5 (Monday) Learn about the Iringa Diocese. Visit the Diocese Head Office, Secondary Schools, Health Facilities, Orphanage, and/or Other Facilities. Tour Neema crafts. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 6 (Tuesday) Continue learning about the Iringa Diocese. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center*

Day 7 (Wednesday) Continue learning about the Iringa Diocese. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.* Prepare for your visit to your companion parish.

Day 8 (Thursday) Companion Parish Visit. Introductions and greetings. Preaching point visits. *Overnight with companions.*

Day 8 (Friday) Companion Parish Visit. Preaching point and school visit. Shared activities. *Overnight with companions.*

Day 10 (Saturday) Companion Parish Visit. Visits continue. Partnership committee meeting. *Overnight with companions.*

Day 11 (Sunday) Worship & Return to Iringa. Worship with companions. Goodbyes. Return to Iringa. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 12 (Monday) Safari. Travel to Ruaha National Park. Half day of game drives. *Overnight in Ruaha.*

Day 13 (Tuesday) Safari. Full day of game drives. *Overnight in Ruaha.*

Day 14 (Wednesday) Prepare for Departure. Return to Iringa. Pack bags. Final shopping. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 15 (Thursday) Drive to Dar. *Overnight at Wista's Inn.*

Day 16 (Friday) Sightseeing in Dar & Departure. Spend the day seeing the sights in Dar. Enjoy a sunset dinner along the Indian Ocean. Head to the Airport for your flights home.

Day 17 (Saturday) Return Minneapolis/Saint Paul International Airport.

SAMPLE ITINERARY – TEN DAYS IN TANZANIA

Day 1 (Thursday) Depart Minneapolis/Saint Paul

Day 2 (Friday) Transfer Flights. Arrive Dar es Salaam. Overnight at Wista's Inn.

Day 3 (Saturday) Drive from Dar to Iringa. Watch the transition from the urban, coastal environment of Dar es Salaam to the agricultural setting of Iringa and the Southern Highlands. Drive through Mikumi National Park. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 4 (Sunday) Worship & Get Acclimated to Iringa. Worship at the Iringa Lutheran Cathedral. Stretch your legs by walking through the town's markets. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 5 (Monday) Overview of BKB & Iringa Diocese. Visit the Diocese Head Office, Secondary Schools, Health Facilities, Orphanage, and/or Other Facilities. Tour Neema crafts. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 6 (Tuesday) Continue learning about the Iringa Diocese. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 7 (Wednesday) Safari. Travel to Ruaha National Park. Half day of game drives. *Overnight in Ruaha.*

Day 8 (Thursday) Safari. Full day of game drives. *Overnight in Ruaha.*

Day 9 (Friday) Return to Iringa. Sightseeing. Prep for Village Visit. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center*

Day 10 (Saturday) Village Visit. Travel to an unpartnered parish. Learn about congregational life. *Overnight in Village.*

Day 11 (Sunday) Worship with Rural Parish. Meet with local leaders. Return to Iringa. Prepare for departure. *Overnight at the Iringa Lutheran Center.*

Day 12 (Monday) Departure. Fly from Iringa to Dar in the morning. Driver meets you at the airport and takes you around Dar for the afternoon. Return to the airport for the evening flight home.

Day 13 (Tuesday) Transfer Flights. Return Minneapolis/Saint Paul International.

MONEY MATTERS

Budgeting: In recent years, the average cost to travel has been between \$3500 and \$5000 per person depending on the time of year, duration of stay, etc. The single largest variable is international airfare which fluctuates based on routing and time of the year. It can range anywhere from \$1200 to more than \$2500. The most direct route from Minneapolis, via Delta/KLM through Amsterdam, is often the most expensive. Alternate routings may be more affordable but can increase the hassle factor and time spent.

In-country expenses average \$2000-2500 per person. The biggest variable there is the cost of ground transportation divided by the number of travelers. To lower costs it is in groups' best interest to fill the vehicles they are in. Working with vendors in Iringa, Travel Coordinators can help you right-size your vehicle.

To assist with budgeting, a Budget Template and Cost Guide are available for download on the Saint Paul Area Synod's website: www.spas-elca.org/bkbtravel. The Cost Guide is updated on a regular basis based on information from our vendors. While every attempt is made to project costs ahead of time, be advised that all prices are subject to change.

BKB Travel Fee: In order to help offset the costs that the Saint Paul Area Synod bears in maintaining a year-round presence in Iringa and supporting travel delegations, in 2012 the Iringa Committee instituted a Travel Fee of \$200/traveler. Fees are collected when Group Leaders submit their Group Reservation form and Roster early in the reservation process.

Group Travel Funds: For the safety and security of our guests, BKB-SPAS collects funds from groups prior to departure and wires them ahead to Iringa where they are available for the payment of group expenses in both US Dollars (USD) and Tanzanian Shillings (TZS). To ensure cash is on hand in Iringa, group travel funds must be received in the synod office no later than six-weeks ahead of departure. Withdrawals and payments from the group's travel fund are facilitated by the Program Coordinator in Iringa. At the conclusion of the trip, any remaining balance can be transferred to a general account or refunded by check.

Managing Group Funds: It is highly recommended to appoint one person to be the role of 'Group Treasurer' and have them assume responsibility for tracking shared expenses and managing group funds. Groups will also want to have a strategy ahead of time for meals out in town; most groups will pay for food and water out of a central pool and ask individuals to chip in for their drinks, etc. Splitting bills per seat is not a common practice.

Personal Money: Tanzania is largely a cash driven economy – especially when it comes to small artists and craftsmen. While some larger shops in Dar (and Neema Crafts, in Iringa) are starting to accept credit cards, most transactions will be in TZS. From handicrafts and carvings to custom clothing and paintings, there are many options to consider at a variety of price points. Most travelers find \$200-500 for souvenirs and incidentals to be sufficient.

Exchanging Money: Individual travelers are encouraged to exchange USD to TZS at the airport in Dar es Salaam upon arrival. While ATMs are available and banks will change money in Iringa, groups have found better rates in Dar. To change USD into TZS, bills should be as new and crisp

as possible. Higher denominations (\$50's & \$100's) typically receive a better rate. Travelers with TZS at the end of their trip will want to change it back to USD prior to departing Tanzania.

Responding to Requests: Requests for financial assistance come in all shapes and forms. Be prepared to receive them and be prepared to respond or redirect appropriately. Cross-culturally, requests can be tricky to handle – they embody both a power-imbalance in our relationships *and* very different understandings of what money is for and how it is to be used.

Investing in social capital and relationships more than individual bank accounts, for our companions in Iringa making requests of family, friends, and strangers for financial help and receiving them is a regular occurrence. Asking for help is common, as is hearing the word 'No.' Neither carry the same stigma that they do in the United States. When receiving a request, be polite but also be aware that 'Maybe' is received as a 'Yes' instead of the polite 'No' that is often intended. At the same time, don't make promises that you can't afford to keep.

Working closely together, BKB-SPAS and BKB-DIRA have established protocols for responding to requests from congregations and individuals. Congregations have strategic plans and lists of projects that are vetted by DIRA; before agreeing to something you are unfamiliar with, check in with BKB-DIRA and the Diocese head office. Likewise, for individuals who are seeking personal contributions and scholarship support, channels have been established in DIRA congregations and institutions to field requests. If ever in doubt, ask the Program Coordinator and leaders from BKB-DIRA; they are there to help.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

When visiting our friends in Tanzania, we want to be respectful of their culture. For your awareness, the following summary describes some differences to be mindful of.

Manners: In Tanzanian society, politeness, modesty and nonaggressive behavior are expected. It is very unusual to witness an argument or highly emotional exchange in Tanzania. Public displays of affection, such as hugs and kisses, are impolite as are demonstrations of strong emotions such as anger or sadness. Tanzanians are usually known for their warmth and friendliness. When shaking hands, they hold the hand much longer than in U.S. Women, however, usually have a limp handshake and look downward, which implies the nonaggressive personality expected of women. A proper way of addressing a new acquaintance is to use titles or last (sur) name. It is considered impolite to call people by their first name until you know them more personally.

Conversation: In Tanzania, it is polite to inquire about the person's health and family, but only in general terms. They are not comfortable talking about pregnancy matters or a girl/boy friend relationship. Often a Tanzanian will respond positively with a "yes" to a request even though they may not understand or intend to follow through. Tanzanians will agree so as not to disappoint. As a guest it is important to accept their hospitality because "it is the way of blessing their home and family."

Meals: In Tanzania, hands are washed before the meal, often with hands held over a bowl into which water is poured by the host and wiped with a common towel or air dried. In Tanzania, the women of the family will serve and usually won't sit with the guests. Common foods in Tanzania are boiled beans (like pork and beans) and peas, white rice, sautéed cabbage with carrots and onions, meat stews, boiled eggs, boiled potatoes, French fries (chips) and fried chicken and pork. Perhaps the most staple food for our Tanzanian friends is Ugali – a cooked white corn porridge that is formed into small balls and dipped into a stew. They grow and love cashews, peanuts, bananas and other fruit. A visitor will find cooked foods and peeled fresh fruits and vegetables safe to eat. They drink hot tea, coffee, soda (soft drinks), water and juice. They do not serve ice in their beverages. Alcoholic beverages are not usually served. The local "brew" may be high in alcoholic content and the method of preparation makes it questionable for consumption.

Religion: Christian Tanzanians are very devout and worship openly and frequently. Prayer is central to every day. Music and dance enhances their worship life. You may also encounter followers of Islam and practitioners of traditional African religions as well.

Dress: Modesty is a value in Tanzania, except in the larger cities or on a university campus. Women wear skirts and dresses, not slacks or shorts. Low cut or sleeveless tops are not the norm in most Tanzanian culture, except in certain tribes. It is wise to wear dresses/skirts, which hang below the knee. Tanzanian women wear little or no makeup and very seldom nail polish. They enjoy jewelry, but rarely wear any. Men wear typical western type clothing (casual shirts, nice pants) but not shorts. They might wear shirts and ties for formal or special gatherings. It is important to dress modestly to discourage misunderstanding of a nonverbal message. As visitors, we show respect by dressing with cultural norms in mind.

Gender roles: Women in Tanzania usually are much more deferential than in America. Tanzania is a male dominated society. A number of women have been appointed to government positions; women in business are becoming more common. Family issues often involve the extended family

and sometimes others from their tribe (ethnic group). The involvement of women in resolving family disputes is usually discouraged, at least publicly.

Male/Female interaction: Tanzanians do not “date” as Americans do. Tanzanian young women are usually not seen alone with a young man. If a young woman shows any interest or attention to a young man, it may indicate to the young man an interest in a more intimate relationship even before marriage. American women tend to be comfortable “flirting” with the opposite sex with no intention of any further commitment. This behavior is confusing for Tanzanian men. Even the way American women might dress at home (low cut tops, low hung slacks, displaying tattoos and piercings) sends a message that is hard for a Tanzanian man to understand.

Greetings and Etiquette: Social order and hierarchy are important to be mindful of during times of greeting and leave-taking. Take care to greet leaders, those of high rank, and elders with graciousness and warmth.

Time: In Tanzania, social relations and social obligations tend to take priority over a strictly followed schedule. While this trait is changing and time-sensitivity is increasing, patience is advised. Trust that things will occur in good time rather than right on time.

For additional information and a more thorough exploration of American and Tanzanian culture and values, read [Africans and Americans, Embracing Cultural Differences](#), by Joseph L. Mbele; Africonexion, Northfield, Minnesota, 2005.

STAYING SAFE AND HEALTHY

The safety and wellbeing of staff, volunteers, and guests in Iringa is a high priority for BKB-SPAS. Although not every event can be planned for, it is of utmost importance that all participants take time to consider what to do when (not if) a crisis should occur.

Risk: There are unavoidable risks in traveling to remote locations like Iringa. BKB-SPAS staff, volunteers, and guests acknowledge that they are aware of and understand the risks and dangers to one's own health and safety, especially domestic and/or international terrorism, civil unrest, political instability, crime, violence, natural disasters, disease and public health conditions in Tanzania and any other countries that they might visit.

Risk Management: As individuals, BKB-SPAS staff, volunteers, and guests will conduct themselves in ways that minimize risk, avoiding situations that would put themselves and others in harm's way. If, in good faith judgment, it is determined that the health, safety or welfare of oneself or others is jeopardized by one's continued participation, they agree to withdraw or be subject to expulsion from the program at their own expense. As an organization, BKB-SPAS establishes policies, protocol, and working relationships to minimize risk for those in-country under its auspices. BKB-SPAS encourages and solicits feedback from its representatives and program participants; actions, or reports of actions, that threaten their safety and wellbeing are tended to with swiftness and all seriousness.

Travel Clinics & Medical Checks: All BKB-SPAS staff, volunteers, and guests are expected to consult with their doctors and travel clinics, follow their advice, and obtain necessary immunizations and medications prior to departing for Tanzania. Medical practitioners should be made aware of one's itinerary, duration of stay, and the limited medical facilities available in Tanzania, in general, and the Iringa region, in specific. Some health concerns may not be able to be accommodated in-country and travel would therefore be discouraged.

Insurance: All BKB-SPAS staff, volunteers, and guests are expected to obtain international health insurance and/or travel cancellation insurance which includes coverage for medical emergencies, evacuation (medical and security), and repatriation of remains.

Eating and Drinking: The CDC recommends eating: food that is cooked and served hot; hard-cooked eggs; fruits and vegetables washed in clean water or peeled yourself; pasteurized dairy products. They recommend drinking: bottled water that is sealed; water that has been disinfected; ice made with bottled or disinfected water; carbonated drinks; hot coffee or tea; pasteurized milk. Tap water in Iringa Town is treated to a relatively high standard; water in rural locations often comes from a well, river, or other untreated source. In villages, your hosts have been instructed how to prepare food in a manner that is safe for your consumption; that being said, most travelers will likely experience some food-related discomfort.

Hygiene and Sanitation: From handling money to countless handshakes, your hands are exposed to a lot of different things. Always wash before meals, using hot soapy water. Some prefer to augment that with hand sanitizers. Bathrooms vary from Western-style seated toilets, to ceramic Eastern-squat toilets, to the occasional hole in the ground. Where flushing isn't an option, a bucket of water and scoop is typically located nearby. Toilet paper is not commonly available as water is typically used to clean oneself; plan on packing your own and using in moderation. Sewage and septic systems are not designed to accommodate feminine products.

Pharmacies and Over the Counter Medicines: The Kalenga Pharmacy is closest to the Lutheran Center, located on the main road down the street from Barclays and next to the Tatanca Office. Green Zone and Acacia, both near the main market, also have considerable stock. Brand names may be different; be sure to know the required active ingredients/formulations.

Medical Consultation: Guests requiring non-emergency medical attention are advised to contact your hosts, BKB-SPAS, and BKB-DIRA.

Medical Emergency/Evacuation: Guests requiring emergency medical attention are advised to contact your hosts, the Program Coordinator, and BKB-DIRA immediately. Group Leaders should have medical evacuation information on hand if/as needed.

REQUIRED FORMS AND PLANNING DOCUMENTS: In order to assist with emergency preparedness and crisis response, BKB-SPAS requires that the following forms and documents be reviewed and completed as appropriate and as specified.

Individual Traveler Form (ITF): All BKB-SPAS staff, volunteers, and guests are required to complete and submit an Individual Traveler Form prior to departing for Tanzania. These forms function as emergency medical information and liability release. Current forms can be received from the Saint Paul Area Synod office. Group Leaders bring one hard copy of the form with them to Iringa. A second copy is sent to the synod office no later than six weeks before departure; this is held on file for the duration of their stay. Repeat travelers are asked to complete the form once per year or as changes are made.

Staying Safe and Healthy in Iringa: All BKB-SPAS staff, volunteers, and guests are required to participate in a safety and wellbeing orientation by the Program Coordinator or their designee upon arrival in Iringa. Each person is to receive a copy of the document 'Staying Safe and Healthy in Iringa.'

US Dept of State (STEP): All BKB-SPAS staff, volunteers, and guests are encouraged to register their travel plans with the United States Embassy and Department of State through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Enrollment enables one to receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in one's destination country and helps the U.S. Embassy make contact in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency. To enroll in STEP visit <https://step.state.gov/step/>