



Mission among Children and Youth in Tanzania

July 2026



Led by missionary Torkild Jensen, sent out by Betania Church Center's Foreign Mission

Dear beloved friends

Readers of our most recent newsletters will know that the past few months have been very turbulent for Tabitha and me. We had planned a sabbatical in Denmark in early summer 2026, during which we were going to travel around visiting churches, our friends, and the communities that support our work. However, that plan fell through as our focus shifted due to Tabitha's illness.

We knew the situation looked serious, but at the same time, we held onto the hope that she might have one more chapter in her life. Unfortunately, her illness worsened, and on June 12, she peacefully passed away and went home to Jesus. The children and I have been supporting one another during this difficult time and understand that it will take time to find peace in our grief.

I am writing this newsletter because there is much to share about the work, which continues thanks to our faithful staff. I also want to let you all know that I feel very clearly that I must continue the work God called us to do. It was Tabitha's greatest wish that both Mirjam and I would carry on the work, and it burns in my heart to continue. I'm traveling back to Tanzania on July 16. I am so grateful that I am not alone in this. Mirjam, our eldest daughter, has decided to step in and take on greater responsibility in our mission work. This also means that she will help me during the transition period when I return to Tanzania.

Tabitha was the one who shouldered the heavy load at our home, at the base in Arusha, at the office with the staff there, and in all the local work. Not to mention keeping in touch with all our supporters and working on the newsletters. We are in the process of distributing these tasks among willing volunteers both in Denmark and in Tanzania. Our staff in Tanzania are ready to take on more responsibility. We are so grateful for the talented people we've welcomed into our team over the years, and for their willingness to help and go the extra

mile for the work. But there's still a big task ahead for Mirjam and me when we return to Tanzania. There are many work routines that need to be updated, and many on our staff need to learn new things.

Please pray for us when we return to Tanzania, for we also know that grief will hit us especially hard as we feel the loss of Tabitha in what used to be our daily life and work community.

Tabitha's funeral

On June 20, we said goodbye to Tabitha at the Betania Church Center in Blåhøj and at Karstoft Cemetery. It was a very beautiful service. We were overwhelmed by how many people came—friends and family from near and far. Even friends of Tabitha's from way back in her youth showed up. For me, it was a really difficult day, but I felt carried through it and was deeply moved by everything that was said about Tabitha.





In accordance with Tabitha's wishes, we asked for monetary "flower gifts" to support the work in Tanzania instead of physical flowers. It was truly overwhelming to receive the list from the mission treasurer showing how many people had sent "flowers" in this way. That money will go toward new faith-based projects that Tabitha felt we should undertake before we returned to Denmark in February 2026. These include, among other things, children in 6th and 7th grade whose mothers are single parents and have lost their jobs. As a result, they can no longer afford to pay for their children's schooling. This would mean that these children would not receive the graduation certificate necessary to continue in the education system. Here, Tabitha made a promise of faith to help, so that so many years of schooling would not be wasted. This is now in place. Tabitha would be overjoyed if she could witness it.

After the burial, we returned to a memorial service in Betania, where good friends in the congregation had prepared a lovely coffee table, providing a warm setting for us to talk together and remember Tabitha as a community.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude. Thank you to everyone who helped with all the practical arrangements and made sure that, despite our grief, it turned out to be a good day after all. Thank you to everyone who attended. Thank you to all of you who sent flowers. You should all know that it meant an incredible amount to me. I'd also like to look back a bit and thank family, friends, and the congregation for your tremendous support while we've been in Denmark. Thank you for all the meals you brought by and all the other practical help you provided.



Our staff



All the guests at the ceremony in Arusha

Farewell in Arusha

Our staff has been completely devastated by Tabitha's illness and death. As a team, they have come together and been praying and fasting for her. And they are now continuing to pray for us and our work.

On the day of Tabitha's funeral, our staff followed the service on a large screen and was thus able to participate in the ceremony. They had printed a beautiful banner to represent Tabitha's coffin, and there, with roses and tears, they were able to say goodbye to her.



The School Mission Team in Olkokola

Olkokola is a rural district northwest of Arusha. It is beautifully situated on the western slope of Mount Meru at an elevation of 1,800 meters and is part of what we call Maasai country. The area is lush and beautiful. At the end of May, our school mission team was invited by a group of local churches in this area to conduct a three-day seminar for Sunday school teachers. They set out on this mission together with our gospel team. Twenty-five participants from seven different churches in the area attended.

The first three days were devoted to training the Sunday school teachers. The last day was a Saturday. That afternoon, they had invited the children from the participating churches to a children's festival, and 130 children showed up! They received excellent Bible instruction and also got to try their hand at various sports and fun singing games. The gospel team sang together with the





They also distributed teaching materials and certificates to the teachers who had participated in the seminar. Everyone agreed that it had been some fantastic and educational days.

Sustainable farming

We have a talented team of five instructors and a co-ordinator based at our office. They do a fantastic job traveling around and teaching sustainable farming principles. They themselves live scattered throughout the area around Arusha, where many members of the Maasai community make their living from agriculture.



The brushwood around the plant sack keeps the livestock away



children. Good food was also provided for them. They were very excited to be there.

All of our staff members stayed in the area through Sunday, where they participated in a joint worship service and contributed with music, singing, and dancing.





Our teaching team

They teach organic farming and all the practical aspects that make farming sustainable—such as rainwater harvesting, the use of compost and livestock manure, controlling insects and diseases with natural methods, and, quite importantly, protecting the garden or field from livestock and wild animals. They also teach about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables.

In April, we took stock of the farming project. In 2025 and the first three months of 2026, courses were held for 425 people from 24 different villages and areas. It's fantastic to see the interest in the courses. And once the participants really get started with their kitchen gardens, the project spreads like ripples in water: neighbors in the villages become curious when they see the results and want to learn how to do it too. We receive many inquiries from areas that want to organize a course.

We also teach these principles to schoolchildren at various schools. They go home and tell their families about it, after which they and their parents start setting up kitchen gardens. This gives hope for future generations.

Monica's surgery went well

Little Monica, for whom we sent out a separate urgent appeal, underwent heart surgery at the end of May. The surgery went according to plan, and she recovered quickly. She returned to Dar es Salaam for a follow-up appointment at the end of June. The doctors also need-

ed to assess whether she required further treatment. The feedback was that everything looked so good that no further procedures are needed. She has now begun to grow up healthy and strong and has everything she needs to lead a good life. The doctors were very pleased.

Thank you to all of you who supported Monica. Your contributions made it possible to help this little girl. Her parents find it hard to express just how grateful they are. They say, among other things: "Thank you for giving our little girl her life back!"

In one photo, you can see Monica as she's being prepared for surgery. The other photo was taken in early July, where you can see her with her parents.



News from Mirjam

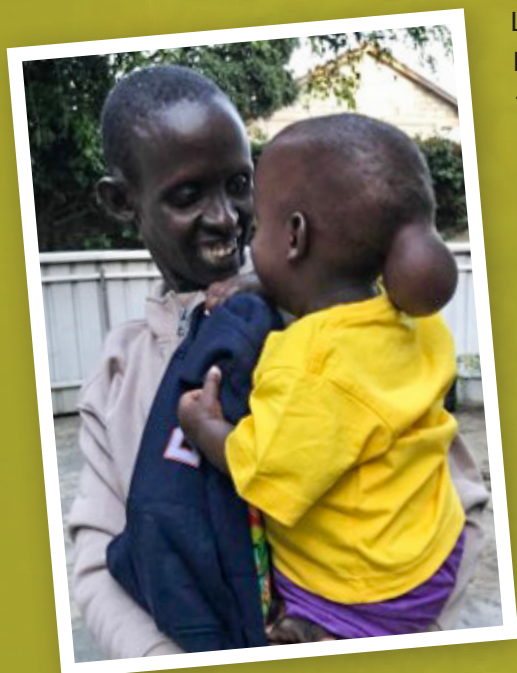
Dear friends,

We are still deeply affected by the loss of my mother. But even in the midst of this, the work in Tanzania is calling us.

It was my mother's wish that I continue my work there, but also that I support my father as he carries on the work that he and my mother began. I can feel in my heart that this is what I must do. There are some heavy burdens to bear, but I believe that God wants this work to continue, so He will provide a way.

I am so grateful for your continued support. Most of all, I need your prayers and God's help in the coming months.

Here's a new situation where I need your help AGAIN:



Little Tobiko Tipili has come to us for help. He has an "extra head," as the Maasai call it. We've taken him to the hospital for a preliminary examination, and he's scheduled to undergo surgery in July—if we

can collectively raise the funds for his treatment.

He comes from one of the new areas where we've started working. His family is very poor and cannot afford to pay for his hospital stay on their own. Tobiko gets so upset when he has to get dressed because it's so hard to pull his clothes over this growth. We'd like to help him so that in the future he'll look normal and won't be bullied by the other children.

The doctor believes it's just fluid and not a tumor related to the brain. The doctor says it can be removed so he'll look "normal" again.

**Warm regards,
Mirjam and the team**

If you'd like to help Tobiko, here's how you can do it:

Transfer to IBAN account no. DK 7097 1207 4179 3075

Account name: Betania Kirkecenters Ydremission

**Swift code: VEHODK22 Bank name: AL Sydbank,
marked "Bjerre's Mission".**

Please write HEAD in the comment

The newsletter is not forwarded but returned with information about the change of address.

Greetings from Betania's Mission Office

It was with great sadness that we had to say good-bye and "see you again" to Tabitha, Torkild's beloved wife. As a couple, they have served as missionaries in Tanzania for nearly 40 years, and they have made a significant difference in the lives of many children and young people.

Over the past two years, Betania's Mission Office has been working to strengthen Tanzanian leadership of the mission work. A capable team in Arusha has been appointed to lead the work. We are confident that this will provide Torkild with favorable conditions. Therefore, we have given our

full support for him to return and resume his work, knowing full well that he will face a different situation without his beloved Tabitha. We will do everything we can to support him and stand with him in his ministry.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to you all for your support of Torkild's work. Thank you for remembering Torkild and his African team, especially during this time of transition.

Torben Madsen
Pastor, Betania Church Center

Safe in God's Family

In the midst of my grief, I have truly experienced the meaning of the words in 1 Corinthians 12:26: "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it." This has quite literally carried me through this difficult time. At the same time, it has shown me that you stand with me. That is why I am going to Tanzania, convinced that I am surrounded by your love and care.

**Warm regards and God's peace,
Torkild**

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