



The Nyadire Connection

The Nyadire Connection (TNC), based in Pittsburgh, PA, is a faith-based non-profit volunteer organization that seeks to support and sustain the United Methodist Mission in Nyadire, Zimbabwe.

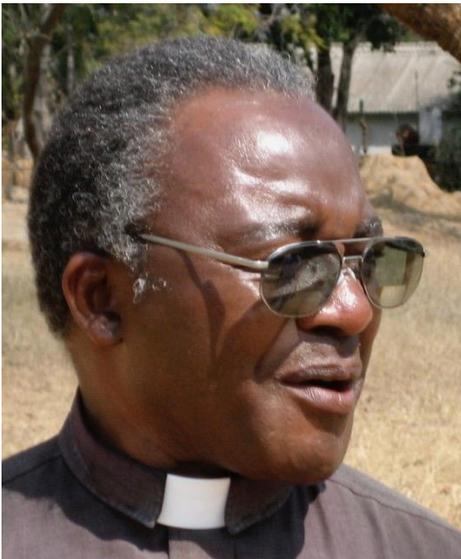
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Rev. Julius Tsiga: 1946-2019

Rest In Peace, Our Dear Friend, Mentor and Pastor



In May, the Lord welcomed a special Angel into his Kingdom: The **Rev. Julius Tsiga**, a friend, mentor and pastor to so many people in Zimbabwe and to those of us in the U.S. associated with TNC. Tragically, Julius was waiting for a church bus, which was taking people to the funeral of another minister, when he collapsed and died. Julius and his wife, Joyce, have four sons (Farai, Kuziwa and Tendai, who live in the U.S.; and Nyasha, who lives in Taiwan).

Born May 19, 1946, Julius lived at Nyadire much of his life. He was partly educated in the U.S., spent time as Chaplain at Africa University, and held many positions at Nyadire. He was Nyadire Station Chairperson before moving toward Mutoko to pastor a local church. He retired Jan. 1 of this year.

Julius was a very special person, sponsor, friend, and mentor to so many of us within TNC. He and Joyce hosted the initial team that travelled to Nyadire in 2006 and he was instrumental in how everything developed over the years. He visited TNC many times in Pittsburgh and preached at several local churches.

Jimmy Vanderschuur attended the funeral and shared these thoughts: "This was a sad week at Nyadire. Every day there were services, most days two at the guest house. On Sunday the service lasted from 8:30 am until noon, and then everyone walked to the cemetery. He is buried next to Sister Rut.

"He was the longest-serving UMC pastor ever in Zimbabwe. There were too many pastors [at the funeral] to count. They represented every circuit in Zimbabwe, Africa University, the Bishop's office, retired pastors, pastors who were students of Rev. Tsiga at the school of theology. There were testimonies from relatives ... His sister said, "Born in a family of nine, Julius was second born. We are only three left; the rest have crossed over. He was very educated, very dignified, and very loving."

Please see pages 4 through 8 for A Selection of TNC's Memories of Julius

Little Things Count In Big Ways



By Elsa Zollars

TNC's Mission Trip to Nyadire in January proved to be an exceptional one, especially for the children of the new **Home of Hope Orphanage (HOH)**.

Maybe a quick visual sense of the Mission will be helpful: Imagine a whole community located on a large oval – the church, Teachers' College, Primary and High Schools at one end and the hospital at the other. Around the oval are other buildings such as the chapel and homes for those who work at the mission – the doctors, the guest house, the home of the station chair (head of the mission), and the previous HOH. The move of the HOH

to new quarters took place on Labor Day, 2018. At right angles to the new HOH is a duplex, housing the HOH/HOHO Administrator and his office. There is land adjoining the Orphanage for potential planting and the opportunity for the children to learn how to grow their own crops.

The January 2019 Mission Team visited the children at the new Home of Hope and delivered the small gifts sent by their sponsors. It was a time of great pleasures as the children opened their gifts. The final gifts were a surprise – pairs of socks (donated by **Callie Zollars**, a 10th grader at Upper St. Clair High School) as well as personalized kazoos (donated by **Phil Himmler** who was on the first mission trip in 2006 and has been a recurring visitor.) Soon the two “items” morphed into the BEST KAZOO/SOX PARTY ever. The children who own only white socks for school uniforms quickly pulled on their crazy socks, took up their musical instruments and played song after song as they danced around the building.

“Where is Thumbkin?” never sounded better, proving once again that joy can come in small packages.

Nyadire's Hearing Impaired Classroom Is One of a Kind

By Elsa Zollars

There is a classroom unlike no other at the Primary School of the Nyadire United Methodist Mission. In fact, there is no other school like this one in all of the country of Zimbabwe. That room is the **Hearing Impaired Classroom (HI)**.

Twenty-four children, 15 boys and 9 girls, grades 1-6 from Mutoko, Mudzia, Machek, Harare, and Chirhu sit around a large table – all in silence. The children are learning basic sign language, socialization skills, and how to be independent. Twenty-three of the children are boarders, and parents visit often and witness their children's progress.



The children communicate with their hands, but their big smiles and occasional sounds cannot convey anything but happiness. “That excitement in learning boasts me,” comments **Evajoyce**, one of the Hearing Impaired Program teachers. **Evajoyce** has special training and was awarded her diploma in Special Needs from the United College of Education in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Her expressions and huge smile are contagious with the children.

One of newest parts of the HI program is teaching basic sewing skills – even to the boys. The intention is that these skills can help with the students' survival. Students learn the entire process – handling and cutting fabric, using needle and thread, and working with machines. Aprons and pillowcases are often some of the projects first tackled. Some students even learn how to sew school uniforms which always have selling power. Parents of Nyadire School boarders are some of the best customers.

Learning to use sewing machines donated from the U.S. is always a challenge as each brand and type has its own operating system. Of course, manually operated machines are an advantage, especially when electricity is not available. FYI – the Nyadire Mission received seven manual and six electrical machines in the last TNC shipment. **Bonnie Lawson** is the TNC Wizard who checks out each donated machine and gets them ready to be shipped in TNC containers. They are distributed to the rural schools where they will be part of the **Girls Empowerment Program** that is already in place. HI students also learn Zimbabwean Sign Language as well as life skills, such as arts and crafts, market gardening, welding, and carpentry.

The **HI Sponsorship Program** is available to provide school fees and a backpack of school supplies for \$125 and/or \$20 a month toward room and board. Being a pen pal with a sponsored child brings great joy on both sides of the globe!

Want more information on how to support a student with a hearing impairment? Contact **Molly Michael** at mollyalice.michael@gmail.com.

A Selection of TNC's Memories of Julius

From Elsa Zollars...

Julius was my brother.

Julius was the one who waited for our delayed flight on my first trip to Zimbabwe in 2008. He saw to our luggage and took us to a lovely place to spend the night and enjoy a good breakfast. He looked after us, exchanged our dollars. The flashback was that I gave him \$100 US, and he returned with stacks of nearly worthless ZIM\$ as it was a time of economic distress.



I recall there was nothing on the shelves of the grocery store except for long bars of green soap. He was the perfect host.

On subsequent trips, Julius and his wife, Joyce, (photo at left) were still looking after the TNC folks, helping us do our work. I loved his sermons since they spoke to me. Joyce was always gracious, inviting me to her home to eat some Zim foods, including her cole slaw (that none of us can replicate). There were chickens all around. There was always someone else living there who had

no other home.

On the memorable 2014 TNC trip which included a trip to Victoria Falls, the bus stopped suddenly and parked on the side of the road. We were surprised when Rev. Austin got up and asked for our attention. He asked Joyce and Julius to stand. Rev. Austin then performed an on-the-bus wedding ceremony. IT WAS THEIR 41st WEDDING ANNIVERSARY that culminated with a huge hug and kiss. We were all hooting and hollering. They loved the trip. One of the best parts was seeing their niece, Chipso, who had lived with them and was working at the hotel.

When Joyce and Julius came to Pittsburgh, I was happy they were able to visit with my family. We always sent letters which I still keep.

And thank you, God, for giving me one more visit with Julius – in February of this year. He had been ill and was recuperating at his place in Mutoko. I sat next to him, we held hands and laughed the whole time.

He was my brother.

From Kathy Surma...

Julius and I drove to Harare with 5 children from HOH to have their dental needs addressed. His sister met us after the dental appointments and we enjoyed lunch at a



restaurant in Harare. The children had never been to a restaurant and Julius patiently explained how to behave and how to order. After lunch, Julius visited with his sister while I took the children for their first Dairy Queen ice cream. We met after this endearing experience and began the drive back to Nyadire.

Julius explained life in Zimbabwe since he was a child. I recall his pride and pain in describing the changes he lived through during all the years of hardship. I learned so many facts I never knew before about

Zimbabwe and loved the country even more. The children needed to stop for a bathroom break, and as we pulled onto a dirt road Julius instructed the children we were at a Bush toilet, boys on right side, girls on left.

When Julius and Joyce were in Pittsburgh they had dental work done at our office in Mt. Lebanon. **Jim Howell's** office is next to ours. Julius' sense of humor came through, and he suggested he and Joyce just go to Jim's receptionist and tell her to tell him clients were there to speak with him. Jim was overwhelmed to see them, and they laughed at Jim's surprise and reaction.

He taught me a lot about life, hardship, and perseverance through one's faith.

From Violet Mutasa McFadden...

I resided in Nyadire from 1991-2015. Rev. Tsiga was so good with teachings. I made use of his great gift in my Sunday school classes. At one time he was connectional ministries chairperson at the district (Mutoko-Mudzi). Rev. Tsiga instructed me to attend a workshop. My response was a big no, because of the following reasons: writing was not my gift, my English was bad, funding for the trip was a problem, and I was a widow at the time.

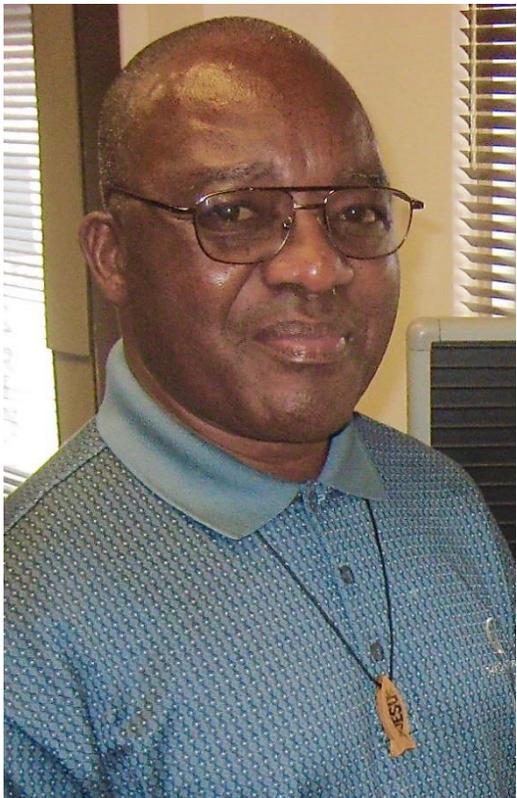
He responded by telling me that I was the best candidate. He was going to provide me with the finances. That left me with no option. The presenter at the workshop was a New Yorker. At the workshop I was told my introduction was good because it was simple, newspaper English, which was ideal. After the workshop I submitted three articles to the Upper Room, and two of the articles were published. From this experience I learned that every one of us is pregnant with gifts. It takes someone to believe in us to give birth to such gifts.

From Sue McCann and Jim Gourley...

We were at Nyadire in November 2013 and were attending church at Nyadire Mission, along with **Sandy McKnight** and **Tim Wesley**. Rev. Tsiga was conducting the service. The church was packed with folks from the Mission and youth from the college and high school. Rev Tsiga knew that Jim's birthday was on this Sunday, Nov. 17, and Sue's birthday was on Nov. 18, so he made the following announcement with that impish smile that he could display at a moment's notice:

"Please wish Happy Birthday to our two dear Missionary friends, Ambuya Sue and Sekuru Jim. They have fewer sunrises ahead of them than sunsets behind." This observation occasioned laughter and clapping. We stood and acknowledged with smiles and appreciation for Rev. Tsiga's humor and TOO TRUE remark.

We will miss Rev. Tsiga's warm smile and dedication to his people and his Lord. Rest in Peace, brother.



From Drew Harvey...

TNC was formed upon return of the first team of 19 that traveled to Nyadire in 2006. Each of the team members on that trip wore a simple wooden "Jesus Fish Necklace" on a cotton string. Julius met the team upon our arrival and quickly became our gracious host, a role that he would continue for the next 13 years. Julius admired these simple necklaces and, not thinking much about it, we of course gave him one. On each of my following trips, I always saw Julius wearing this necklace. He wore it when he preached, and he wore it on trips to visit TNC in the USA.

For me, the necklace symbolizes who Julius was - a simple and humble man with deep Christian convictions that he lived and shared with all.

My wife, Paula, and I sponsored a delightful young girl named **Lindiwe** at the HOH. She is HIV positive and it was critical that she take her antiretroviral therapy (ARTs) and medicine each day as well as receive a balanced nutritional diet for the treatment protocol to work. In her early years, Lindiwe was not doing well and clearly suffering poor health. Joyce and Julius took Lindiwe into their home and made sure she received adequate meat for protein and provided her with a lot of support and attention. Under their care, Lindiwe soon improved, prospered, and was able to return to the HOH. Julius knew every child at the HOH and cared enough to do whatever he could to help them succeed. Thanks to Julius and Joyce, Lindiwe is now a strong young lady and a recent new mother.

From Sue Bower...

When I think of Julius (outside of his minister duties), I see his impish smile and twinkling eyes. I hear him laughing as he won another game of Bananagrams. I see him snicker as he ate another treat that Joyce told him not to! I can see him in front of the group at the 10th anniversary dinner, giving his speech. I can see him guiding us through the grocery store to buy the right things that Joyce told him to. I can see him holding my hand when I was afraid to walk near the edge at the Ruins. I can also see him standing in front of the Nyadire church, leading everyone in prayer. He was our pastor, our mentor, our tour guide, our friend.

From Mary Beth Zollars...

Words elude me.
Memories abound.

The children at the Home of Hope called him “sekuru”, which is a term of endearment for uncle or grandfather. Julius knew each of them, their names, their personalities, their



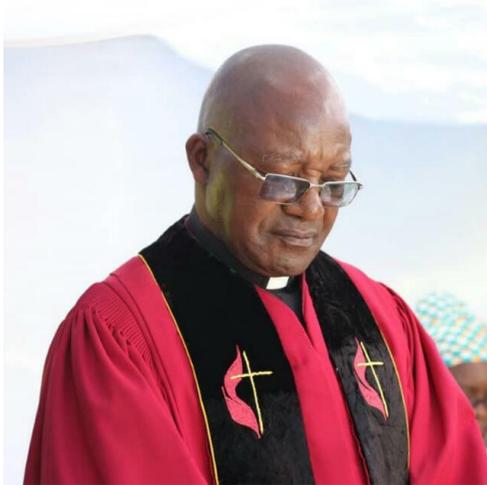
gifts, their troubles. He was their pastor and came to the Home of Hope every Monday evening for special Bible lessons. He and his wife, Joyce, included the children in the activities of the mission and of their home. Some would tend to their goats, some would pluck the fruits, some would deliver fresh eggs to the HOH. The children felt safe and secure under his protection. They witnessed the love of Joyce and Julius’ family, the love for their Nyadire community, for the patients at the hospital, for the students at the schools, and the love for the Bible. The Volunteer-in-Mission Teams knew Julius and his wife as the greatest of hosts. They understood us well from their time in the U.S. Julius was thoughtful and insightful. Not only did he meet us at the airport and take care of our lost luggage, he took us to weddings, introduced us to members of the community, prayed with us, encouraged us, laughed with us, and tended to our needs. He was our pastor, our friend, a great soul. I’ll always remember his gifts as a pastor, his laughter, his helpful hands, his friendship. I still had so much to learn from him. May we listen for his voice upon each visit to Nyadire.

From Lovemore at the Home of Hope...

It was God's time. I miss him so much. I remember the time I was living with him for a bit. I was tending to his home when he was gone. He left me some snacks to enjoy. Oh, he was so nice. I just miss the man. He was like our uncle. May he rest in Peace.

From Kudakwashe at the Home of Hope...

Our beloved sekuru is gone. He was a loving one to the Home of Hope children.



From Jackie Campbell...

I traveled to Nyadire in late 2009 with **Drew Harvey** and **Jim Howell**, so I was invited to stay at the Tsiga's house, rather than in the guest house with the other two travelers. I most remember how thoughtful both Julius and Joyce were, how they were so concerned that I would be comfortable.

One of the things Drew was checking on during the visit was the water system and I knew that water was somewhat scarce. Yet each night Julius insisted on drawing a warm bath so that I could be relaxed and ready for sleeping. I also will always be grateful for their comforting presence when I got word that my mother, who had been in a nursing facility for a few years, had passed away. The Tsigas arranged transportation to the airport for me and Joyce escorted me to Harare to get a flight home. It was a sad end to my time there, but the compassion shown by all of the people of the mission is unforgettable.

From Lois Swestyn...

Like many who have made trips to The UM Nyadire Mission in Zimbabwe, I will forever remember the warm welcome given to us by Rev. Julius Tsiga and his wife, Joyce. He would meet us at the airport with a smile on his face. Julius was always willing to make another trip to Harare to take care of picking up lost luggage or those who were arriving at another time. He treated me with such respect as we walked together serving Jesus as pastors. He asked me to preach at chapel for the children, the high school students, and for the teacher's college. He was encouraging every step of the way helping in any way that he could especially with pastor conference preparations.

Joyce would prepare special American food for the mission team so we would not be homesick. I had the privilege while serving the Liberty/Amity UM Charge in the Washington District to host Rev. Tsiga and Joyce who provided insight to the congregation about their life in Zimbabwe and their service to many. He was a father figure and a brother in Christ to many throughout his life. Well done good and faithful servant, well done indeed! No matter what his age when he died, I say, "Gone too soon!"

TNC's Annual Report To Conference Demonstrates Growth

Now in its second decade after being founded in 2006, TNC continues to grow and make an impact a long way from home – some 8,400 miles from Pittsburgh. TNC (www.nyadire.org) provides help to support and sustain the Nyadire United Methodist Mission in northeastern rural Zimbabwe, Africa. As a partnership, the individuals and churches involved have also greatly enriched their own faith journey as they respond to our Christian call to help. The Nyadire Mission offers a hospital, nursing school, school system (preschool through high school), orphanage, teachers' college, farm, and many other services to the surrounding community.

Founded after a mission trip by a group of Pittsburghers in 2006, TNC partners with the Nyadire Mission to support 13 programs in three core areas: Health, Education/Relationships, and Orphans. TNC includes a network of six Pittsburgh-area churches – CUMC, St. Paul's, Dutilh, Mt. Lebanon, First Bethel, and Baldwin Community – and many more individuals who provide periodic donations, sponsorships and other forms of support. The "network" churches have a long history of engaging regularly with TNC, leading a program, advocating for TNC within their church, and prioritizing Nyadire as their international mission choice, and we are always looking to expand this network to include other churches. Donations for any of TNC's programs can be sent directly to The Nyadire Connection, c/o Christ United Methodist Church, 44 Highland Road, Bethel Park, PA 15012, or through the Conference by designating Nyadire (Advance #MS004800P) on your church remittance form.

TNC impacts lives in Nyadire in a variety of ways, including:

- *Orphans* - Sponsorship of orphans at the Home of Hope orphanage and educational sponsorships for orphans in area schools continue as foundational programs for TNC. These programs always need additional sponsors and offer a true connection between sponsor and child. Funds underwrite the operational budget for the HOH orphanage and keep about 400 kids in school.
- *Engineers Without Borders* - TNC continues the effective partnership with the EWB student chapter at Carnegie Mellon University. The initial project that provided solar street lighting to the Nyadire campus is complete and the students are now developing a Cooking System for Nyadire Primary School that utilizes BioGas rather than firewood.

- *Making it easier for residents to gather water.* TNC donated two Hippo Water rollers that are used at the rural health clinics of Chikwizo and Chendenga. Hippo Rollers are an innovative yet simple idea that changes lives. Their aim doesn't solve the issue of having water but it provides an immediate and appropriate alternative to access water. These containers can hold up to five times more water than a five-gallon bucket and are durable enough to be rolled across rough terrain. They are also user-friendly for children and older adults and can be easily cleaned. Our friends in Nyadire are very aware of how important water is as a resource. Often times, the country struggles through severe droughts when water becomes very scarce or dry spells when the government has shut off electricity. In rural areas during these situations, Zimbabweans fetch their water from a shared local source such as a well or borehole. Most times, retrieving water from a local source requires walking or traveling a far distance.



- *Providing scholarships for education and orphans.* TNC is initiating a new program that will provide financial scholarships for Home of Hope orphans and children of neighboring rural schools. Applications are being accepted at Nyadire and we are working to establish program leadership and secure funding. For more than 10 years, TNC has provided financial educational sponsorships for students for primary and secondary schooling. In 2018, TNC decided to assist these students further with their pursuit of either academic or vocational education to enable them to become active and contributing members of their community. In order to sustain the significant early work in supporting educational opportunities for primary through secondary grades, TNC announced the **Sister Rut Scholarship Program** in 2018. **Sister Rut Lindgren** (photo on right) was a missionary nurse from Finland who lived in Nyadire for more than 35 years. Through her years of ministry Sister Rut oversaw the expanded program on immunization for the hospital, driving out to surrounding villages each day to provide immunizations and clinic-based care in hard-to-reach areas. She would visit 24 villages on a weekly basis. Sister Rut had a deep love for the least of God's children, being an orphan herself. Rut adopted and raised many Zimbabwean children during her time in Nyadire. She has been quoted to say: "Every child needs to be held," and she continued to live accordingly. In 1999 the life project of Sister Rut, the "Home of Hope" Orphanage was opened in Nyadire.



Today, many children are enjoying the fruits of Sister Rut’s ministry as are numerous people who have been affected by her love and care.

- *Improving vision and hearing.* Our TNC **Eyeglasses** team provides eye testing and eyeglasses for residents and has served nearly 8,000 patients, including one who is 110 years old. On average about 50% of the patients are fitted with used donated prescription eyeglasses. Through this program, TNC works with Mission Vision of Pittsburgh to collect used eyeglasses, then trains local residents in Nyadire to conduct eyeglass clinics so they can provide the appropriate glasses to those patients in need. Through the **Hearing Impaired Program**, we provide funds for SolarEar Hearing Aids and teach proper use and maintenance so that 24 students are able to learn effectively at school and also develop critical life skills.



- *Improving sanitary protection for young women.* The **Girls Empowerment Program** provides a means for sanitary protection for young women so they can continue to attend school or work during their monthly menstrual cycle. Through the program, TNC volunteers host “sewing parties” to cut cotton fabric and assemble materials into kits that allow recipients to sew their own reusable pads. As with all



TNC projects, the input and ownership of Zimbabwean partners are essential. Local participants help refine pad designs, and run project implementation activities that include training in pad production, health education, and distribution of kits to women and girls in Nyadire and the surrounding area.

- *Rebuilding rural medical clinics.* In 2018, TNC’s rural health clinic renovation efforts continued, with the beginning of work at the Dindi clinic. That’s the fourth clinic to be renovated since the program began in 2013, with two more to go. TNC has also provided clinic furnishings by working together with Brothers Brother Foundation and sending the items over via ocean containers. The Nyadire United Methodist Hospital administratively manages these clinics in northeast Zimbabwe. Each serves a population of between 5,000 to 8,000 people who live in the region, with many of them walking miles to a clinic for treatment of malaria, cholera, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases. Most clinics **did** not have running water or flush toilets and all need electrical service, water facilities, and additional space.

Let's Not Forget The Passion

Let's not forget the passion that we felt in Zimbabwe.
There, we saw unbridled love in the people we saw each day.
In poverty, their joy glowed a golden sheen which inspired a hope,
a dream clearly seen.

Let's keep the dream alive as the hope within us grows
to see their lives improve as God's grace through us bestows.
There is within potential to make this dream come true
if we pray to our God, then pursue.

Let's celebrate our love for God in every day
by remembering the people met, our friends in Zimbabwe.
Let's not forget the passion. We felt inward pain.
God, we pray you will send us again.

Haur-Himmler

(Composed in 2006 on a flight returning from Zimbabwe)

Remember, as they say in Zimbabwe,
"God is good all the time; all the time, God is good."