

THE HERALD

Newsletter of the Orrville Grace Brethren Church

My Son's Short Life Was Not a Waste

By John Musyimi

Tugi Mbugua Musyimi was a part of our family for nine months. God began knitting him together in his mother's womb at some point in July 2022. From the moment we first learned of his existence, we were excited as God answered our prayer to grow our family.

Over the course of monthly visits to the doctor, we saw Tugi develop from a little bean-shaped blip on the screen to a full-blown baby. We heard his heart beat many times and watched him play in the womb. With every willful kick and strong heartbeat was the promise of a healthy and active son. In one of the scans, we got a 3D image of his face. I concluded he looked like me. His mom protested a little but eventually accepted that, at the very least, his lips betrayed the strength of the Musyimi genes.

Together with some friends, we nicknamed him "T5," and we

brainstormed to find a name starting with a T for him. Many name ideas, mostly from me, were tried and discarded in that search. His siblings—Taji, Tami, Tia, and Tando—had a couple of name suggestions that were also, more gently, rejected.

His siblings were very excited about him joining the family. While we called him "T5," they called him "the baby." We must have answered a hundred questions from them about the baby: "What does the baby eat?" "Can the baby speak?" "Is the baby sleeping?" "When will the baby come out?" "How will the baby come out?" (That last one was met with an awkward silence from my wife and me, and a "Have you finished your homework?") Tugi's immediate predecessor, Tando, set aside a little green cup for him to drink out of. They spoke to Tugi all the time: "Hi, baby." "Bye, baby." "Goodnight, baby."

Even before his birth, Tugi was contributing much fodder for conversation among our family and friends. He was loved. He was cared for.

He was provided for and protected.

And then came March 22, 2023.

Gone

Unbeknownst to us, while turning and playing in his mom's womb, Tugi got the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck. Slowly, his life ebbed out of him.

My wife, Mumbi, noticed later in the day that she couldn't feel him move as much as she was used to. She'd had a busy day making final preparations for Tugi with his grandmother, so we attributed the fewer movements to his being asleep. We'd heard that at 38 weeks it was fairly common to have fewer movements as the baby fills up more space in the womb, so we decided we'd go to the doctor the following day if things didn't improve. We went. First scan—no heartbeat heard. Second scan—a concerned look on the doctor's face.

“We have a problem,” he said.

“Is the baby gone?” we asked.

“Yes.”

Our world was shattered.

Afflicted but Not Crushed

Amid tears of pain and disbelief, we informed close family and friends, who quickly came to our aid. Soon after, we were at the Aga Khan Hospital maternity

wing, preparing my wife to go through the arduous process of labor and delivery. An unusual degree of fortitude was needed to birth our lifeless baby. Still, by God's mercy, she did, and 24 hours later, we held in our arms the body of our little Tugi. A week later, we held a service and buried his body at the Lang'ata Cemetery.

In the wake of our loss, we've received and continue to receive exceptional comfort and care from the saints of Emmanuel Baptist Church. They prayed, visited, called, texted, delivered meals, and gave financially. Our families also served us selflessly throughout the nightmarish experience. Other communities extended their care and support to us in various ways. (In case any of you are reading this, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.)

Tugi's life was full of dignity and worth. In his 268 days lived in the womb, this is some of what Tugi did for us:

1. He made us see and appreciate God's power. Every scan was a window into the wonder of God's intricate wisdom.
2. He brought us great joy. His very being was a delight to us. The sounds of his heartbeat, his kicks and movements, the picture of his face on the 3D scan, and our projections of what he'd look and be like when born were all a source of great joy from God.

3. He made us pray. He was often the subject of our petitions and thanksgiving to God. We asked for a healthy pregnancy and God graciously gave us one in Tugi.
4. He enriched our marriage. My wife being pregnant with Tugi created many opportunities for her and me to serve each other that we wouldn't have had otherwise. That was good for us.
5. Even in his death, Tugi faintly but distinctly reminds us of the story of the gospel. You see, there's another who lost a son. The difference is that he lost a son so that Mumbi and I and many others could have eternal life. God the Father gave up his son Jesus Christ, the incarnate One, who died to save us. His death, unlike Tugi's, was not an accident but a voluntary act to make atonement for all who would turn from sin and trust in him. He didn't stay dead but rose again victorious over the grave. His resurrection guarantees that one day Tugi will also be raised along with us. We'll be reunited once again to an indestructible life, and together we'll behold our God.

Though Tugi's life was short, it wasn't wasted. He was a gift from God, though he was intended only to be enjoyed and stewarded for a brief time.

As for us, though we're under dark clouds, we have received deep mercy

from our Lord through his people. Our grief is great, but his grace is greater. Crushed as we are by Tugi's sudden death, we kiss the rod that smites us and say, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21).

No better words could be found to conclude than those of King David when his own infant son died: "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).

Goodbye, son.

October 1, 2023
Worship & Church Picnic
held at
the Community Center
at Kidron Park

10:00am Worship at Kidron Park
 12:00pm Carry-in Fellowship Meal
 1:00pm Free Time Activities
 Softball
 Horseshoes
 Hillbilly Golf
 Corn Hole
 Board Games
 Fellowship

4434 Kidron Rd, Dalton, OH 44618

FUNNIES

Sally came running to her mom and said, "Billy broke my dolly." "When?" mommy asked. "When I hit him over the head with it." replied Sally.

"I'm going to have to fire my secretary," the executive said to his friend. "She's constantly asking me to spell the simplest words for her." "That can be annoying," his friend said. "Annoying, nothing!" he said. "It's embarrassing to have to say 'I don't know' all the time."

As an Atlanta resident stood at a downtown street intersection, a stranger came up and asked, "Is this the second turn to the left?"

A group of friends wanted to get together on a regular basis, socialize, and play games. The lady of the house was to prepare the meal. When it came time for Al and Jean to be the hosts, Jean wanted to outdo all the others. She decided to have mushroom-smothered steak. But mushrooms are expensive. Her husband suggested, "Why don't you go down in the pasture and pick some of those mushrooms? There are plenty in the creek bed." She said, "No, some wild mushrooms are poison." He said, "Well, I see varmints eating them and they're OK." So Jean decided to give it a try.

She picked a bunch, washed, sliced, and diced them for her smothered steak. Then she went out on the back porch and gave Ol' Spot (the dog) a double handful. Ol' Spot ate every bite. All morning long, Jean watched Ol' Spot and the wild mushrooms didn't seem to affect him, so she decided to use them.

The meal was a great success, and Jean even hired a helper lady from town to help her serve. After everyone had finished, they relaxed, socialized, and played cards and dominoes. About then, the helper lady came in and whispered in Jean's ear, "Mrs. Williams, Ol' Spot is dead." Jean went into hysterics. She called the doctor and told him what had happened.

The doctor said, "That's bad, but I think we can take care of it. I will call for an ambulance and I will be there as quickly as possible. We'll give everyone enemas and we will pump out everyone's stomach. Everything will be fine. Just keep them calm."

Soon they could hear the siren as the ambulance was coming down the road. The EMTs and the doctor had their suitcases, syringes, and a stomach pump. One by one, they took each person into the bathroom, gave them an enema, and pumped out their stomach. The scene was not pretty. After the last one was finished, the doctor came out and said, "I think everything will be fine now," and he left.

They were all looking pretty weak sitting around the living room and about this time the helper lady came in and whispered to Jean, "You know, that fellow that run over Ol' Spot never even stopped."