

PARTNER PLAN

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Dear Family and Friends

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures for ever PS 118:1

We have been back in Zambia now for nearly 8 weeks after our furlough. This was extended for two weeks as Ida tested positive for Covid the week of our original flight. To end our furlough we had another 10 days of isolation which was a great help to catch up and finish off matters pending.

We had a good family time at Christmas and New Year. As well as Euan and Mubita's birthdays, we were able to attend Elsi Florence's baptism and had a special week with Dad who stayed with us in Edinburgh while his kitchen in Cambusbarron was renovated. It was a good time too to visit and have meals with many old friends as the public health restrictions were gradually eased. We were able too, to visit our supporting Churches in person with the exception of Kinlochleven. However, we were able to catch up with them and the other Lochaber Congregations by Zoom. We had also hoped to visit the Rev Dr Kabonde who is now with the Methodists in SW England after visiting Gregor, Sarah and the girls but Covid made this impossible

We did the necessary follow-ups related to our medical check-up and then travelled back to Zambia with 3 extra suitcases filled with knitting, baby clothes and other medical materials kindly donated by supporting congregations, including a rather lethal looking thermo-coagulator for Mbereshi generously donated by Callender Kirk.

We arrived back in Lusaka on 14th February and took our luggage back to Mwandi and met with the Senior Chief. The following week we had the car serviced in Livingstone, carried on to Lusaka to pick up Ellie for Half-Term and meet with Ainsley from Chitendai who was looking at possible locations of solar farms on UCZ land. Ellie arrives home for the Easter holidays this weekend.

At the same time, we visited the Turkish and Czech Embassies in pursuit of help with the Hospital Oxygen Programme. That weekend we celebrated Ru and Lucy's birthdays. Ida drove with Ainsley to Mbereshi for a site inspection and to hand over the thermo-coagulator, while Keith handed over to Mr Kalumbi the Acting Education Secretary at Synod, until a permanent replacement is found. The Education Secretaries met, held their AGM and had a fruitful meeting with the Permanent Secretary on Fees and Keith handed over to the new Secretary who was elected at the AGM. We then travelled back with Ainsley to Mwandi who discussed the proposed solar development with stakeholders. We took Ainsley back for his debrief at Synod.

The Sheltered Workshop made plans to extend into layers as there is a market for eggs. A meeting was held with the local Church who gave their blessing for this project to go ahead, together with the fish-ponds being refurbished at a later date. It is good to be back working locally again.

Much of our time recently has been taken with the Brickyard to try and reduce costs. Our main inputs, cement and quarry gravel have rocketed with the rising fuel prices. Fuel has increased in February to 21.54 from 20.15 and in March it moved to 26.22 (US\$1.50 per litre.) There are to be monthly adjustments in line with world prices. The hiring of the truck has increased by K1500 per load, without our own truck it will be almost impossible to keep the blocks affordable to the local market.



Bricks for the Oxygen Slab



Morning Devotions at the Brickyard

Last weekend we were able to visit the clinic at Masese which we were involved with our Irish friends in helping to develop in the early 2000s. The staff were able to share with us their needs and priorities for the coming year.

Ida continues to be busy with CHAZ and we had a quick trip to Lusaka for the Executive and Quarterly Trustees meetings. I was able to do update minutes and complete the final paperwork for the handovers.

Another farewell was to Alison Gibbs a Mission Partner and friend, from the United Reformed Church, who served in Zambia for almost 25 years. She served faithfully as a teacher, bursar, chaplain and latterly as Headteacher of Mwenzo and Mabel Shaw Girls Schools, as well as on the Synod World Partnership. She had served in the Pacific for 10 years prior to coming to Zambia. Her support, experience and expertise were invaluable in developing quality education for girls at UCZ Mission schools. She willingly serving the Church in a variety of capacities and was an active member of the Women's Christian Fellowship. Alison also gathered a large extended family around her and was mother to a number of orphans and vulnerable girls. We wish her

There are three major on-going building projects that are taking much of Ida's time at the moment. The Doctors houses are nearing completion with just the interiors to finish, electrics, ceiling-boards and painting. The sterilisers' housing is complete and they are being put in place and will shortly be plumbed and the electrical connections made. This is to be done before the arrival of the surgical team later this month. Work has also started on the slab for the Oxygen manifold. It will be housed outside at the back of the Maternity Unit and the oxygen piped to the wards. Grateful thanks go to all our supporting Churches who have contributed to make this possible.



Pegging out the foundation of the Oxygen Housing

We have two Finnish nurses, Vima and Elina, staying in Tutwana at the moment they are on rural attachment here in Mwandu. The two are part of an exchange programme that is run between the Livingstone School of Nursing and the Finnish Health Service. They are enjoying the challenges and experience provided by both the wards and outreach.

Covid infections and deaths have been quite low for a while now 125 cases in the last 24 hours and no deaths. Nearly 2.25 million vaccinations have been given. Total deaths amount to 3967. People are becoming much more casual but the 5 golden rules are still in force: masking, distancing, avoiding crowds, hand-washing and sanitizing and seeking medical advice if unwell.

Ida is preaching at Loantja this Palm Sunday on "Doing God's Mission" - a good start to Holy Week. The Churches in Mwandu are holding their usual joint procession. As we travel through the days to Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, we are reminded by Eric Liddell writing about the resurrection, that when all seems lost and there is nothing to hold on to there is still hope, life and joy beyond our imagining. With the resurrection there is new life, new joy and new hope!



Wishing you all a very happy Easter.

With love
Keith Ida & Mubita

