

The United Church of Zambia

Mwandi Mission  
Box 60693  
Livingstone  
Zambia

12 December 2015

Dear Family and Friends

**I will be like the dew to Israel. Hosea 14: 5**



In a poem, Oscar Romero reminds that Advent is about seeing the face of Christ in the people we meet in our daily lives and in those those who need our help and support. If we do this people will not be robbed, cheated or denied their rights. Whatever is done to them, is done to Christ. Advent, he says, is Christ living amongst us.

Both of us have been busy both within and outwith Mwandi, after handing the 5 Congolese children back to the authorities in mid-October. We have since heard through the social work department that they are well, and still in Lusaka. Attempts to find their families in Lubumbashi have failed but we have been told that they were definitely being trafficked by a ring with international connections.

Keith then travelled to the October meeting of the Synod Strategic Planning Committee which is undertaking an end of term evaluation of the 2011-15 plan. A new plan will be drafted next year for the 2017-2021 period.

At the end of October we took 11 days local leave to attend our nephew and god-son's wedding in Ireland. We flew first to Dublin where we were graciously hosted and spoiled by Ryan and Maryliz in their home. They are former trainees from Arthur Cox now employed by the same firm; both members of groups who came annually between 2008 and 2013 to help refurbish Masese Clinic. The firm's partners visited Mwandi last year and invited us to give a lunch-time, Power-Point talk about our life and work to their Law Company. In the evening we were invited to dinner. Afterwards we spent a relaxing few days exploring Dublin with a literary walk and visits to Trinity, the Book of Kells and other attractions. We appreciate so much their making this possible and arranging our programme.

Mid-week, we took the train to Limerick for Roy and Katie's wedding. Most of the family and friends were staying in the same hotel, so it was a great way of catching up, having everyone in the same place over the same period. The wedding was a three-day event and in this way we were able to get to know Katie's family too. The weather was amazing for November, a real Martini Summer as the Swiss say –nothing to do with vermouth but good weather around Martinmas! Limerick is an interesting historical city on the Shannon. We walked around and visited the castle with its interactive display; ideal for Mubita and grandchildren.

We arrived back in time to drive up the road to Kabwe for the Synod Executive. For Keith, the World Partnership Committee had revised their Terms of Reference and this had to be proposed and passed. There were another two matters for Education, besides the annual Report, namely the restructuring of the Department and a Bursary Scheme for the children of the Clergy. Ida was interested especially to hear the Health Report. Later in the day, the Staff Appointments and Stationing Committee, in our absence, agreed to transfer us, Ida and me, officially, from Mwandi

Mission to Synod Headquarters as Health and Education Secretaries respectively. After Recommendations, Resolutions and the Loyal Address the Executive closed.

We remained in Kabwe for another two days as the Council for World Mission in Africa were running a consultation on missional congregations as life-affirming communities. We compared the economy of greed with the alternative economy of life, looking at areas of exploitation and enslavement and how these work against Christian values such as honesty, dignity accountability social justice and ecological sustainability. We also spent time attempting to refine the UCZ's mission goals nationally and locally.



At the end of the month a Retreat for all the UCZ Mission Partners that the Synod World Partnership Committee organised, took place, again in Kabwe. All but two Partners were able to attend with their families. We were a cosmopolitan bunch: American, Australian, Bangladeshi, English, Scots, Welsh, Zambian and Zimbabwean. It was a good time for refreshment and growth with a balance of praise and worship, discussion and reflection. There were also opportunities for relaxation and fellowship with the braai and the afternoon at Ibis Gardens. The programme was led by a very skilled and inspired Chaplaincy Team; Rev Patrice Siyemeto supported by the Rev Laston Chisanga and Rev Georgina Mukupa. The Bishop for Central Province arranged for Sunday School teachers and Girls Brigade Officers to help with the Children's Retreat and Messy Church. Our grateful thanks go to the Methodist Church and Rev George Lind for their help in making this memorable event a reality.

This was followed a week later by another trip to Lusaka for a meeting with the Education Secretaries Forum. We met at the Catholic Secretariat to work on the agenda for our meeting the following day, Tuesday, 8 December with the Minister of Education. All the Churches in Zambia with grant-aided Mission Schools who complement the Government in the education sector were invited. The Government was grateful for our partnership and the Minister mentioned an expanded role for the Church in the education sector. A review of the existing Memorandum of Understanding was overdue. It was a fruitful meeting that covered a number of topical issues of mutual concern.

As Keith came home, Ida went out to a CHAZ Board of Trustees Meeting in Lusaka dealing with amongst other things, Budget and Work Plan matters and this year's erratic and inadequate Hospital Grants. Family Planning, Teenage Pregnancies with related school drop-out rates and Cervical Cancer were other areas of concern.

At Mwandi with the rolling power-cuts we are grateful to the American Board for the ZESCO inverter that lights the corridors in the new refurbished part. We are grateful too to other donors from Scotland and elsewhere that made it possible to extend this form of lighting to the Doctor's Examination Room, Maternity, Labour Ward and Theatre.

At the end of this week we return to Lusaka with David and Nawa to work on the house at Synod we have been given. We will begin modernising the plumbing and electrics and return to Mwandi on around the 22<sup>th</sup> December

As Christmas approaches the clan in Africa is beginning to gather. We are fortunate, as this year we have Catriona with us. Ruairidh, Fiona, Lucy and Cora are visiting Mwandi, so we will celebrate our traditional Danish Christmas Eve with them. We have already found the ducks, red cabbage and the cream (unfortunately long-life) and black cherries for the *ris a l' amande*.

As we lit the third Advent Candle yesterday and sat down to celebrate Ru and Fiona's 7<sup>th</sup> (Woollen) Wedding Anniversary our thoughts naturally went to other family members. Kirsten Stuart and Iona are waiting on a new arrival just after Christmas and also Gregor and Sarah with little Maia, now 3 months and out of the Moses basket, and into her cot.

As we remember the coming of the Incarnation into the world and our lives we wish you his peace and joy. With our love and every blessing in the coming year.

Keith Ida & Mubita