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Dear Family and Friends

Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known..... Habakkuk 3:2

The Scripture above has been chosen by the United Church of Zambia as their theme for this year. It is a prayer for spiritual renewal, however, the Church has also a number of infrastructure projects such as the new Synod Complex building and organisational developments such as missional congregations. It continues to be present, serving worshipping and sharing the Gospel in the neediest areas, recognising, developing and supporting the gifts in local congregations. We too are using the Scripture as the theme for our deputation work.

The major event for both of us in April was the Synod Executive Board meetings where Keith reported on the UCZ Schools performance in the National Exams, discussions and cooperation with Ministry of Education and policy documents. Other important areas were school infrastructure developments and Human Resource matters. As Convenor of the Synod World Partnership Committee approval was also sought for a Memorandum of Understanding between the UCZ and the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and for the recommendation of a number of UCZ clergy to serve with Partner Churches overseas.

We had another visit from Lyn and Bob Connelly from Kincardine. Lyn and Bob accompanied Ida to all her board meetings. Lyn was able once again to work with staff at each institution and providing advice on treatment for the skin conditions that presented. Bob drafted a concept paper to the Scottish Government to address the water needs at Masuku and Chipembi. This we hoped would be a pilot project that could be applied to other schools and clinic. However, this did not proceed any further as the Government suggested they were oversubscribed and only prioritised those that met the Government's area of interest, priorities and geographic clustering!

Prior to leaving for furlough Keith attended a Council for World Mission in Johannesburg looking at their current Partner in Mission Programme and reviewing the processes and tools involved in this with working groups and plenary. Ida went to Mwandia to help Peggy Schrieber's American Surgical Team who were paying their annual visit. She visited six UCZ Churches with UNAIDS in the Compounds to select where congregational clinics offering ART Treatment, Under-Five care,

Prevention Ante and Post Natal Care are being set up to decongest the local Ministry of Health Clinics.

At the end of the first week in May we left Lusaka for furlough. We left Ellie and her Mum in the house along with Sulota who is working on her nursing degree and in need of some accommodation in Lusaka during this period of study.

On arrival we met Euan, our first grand-son who had been born in our absence and enrolled Mubita at Flora Stevenson Primary. He is with the same carer and class as last time which has been helpful for him. Our first week in St Andrews took in speaking to local schools during the day and Church groups in the evening. It was good too to worship at Newburgh, Abdie and Dunbog on the Sunday morning and speak to the Howe Churches in the evening. We are once again very grateful to the Uys Family for giving us the loan of a car for our use and to undertake our work in our Presbyteries.

We were once again corresponding members at the General Assembly. It was interesting to see that the Assembly too with many of its deliberations reflected the prevailing rather self-absorbed and inward-looking atmosphere of post-Brexit Britain. Ida spoke about the need to continue to support and advocate for care and support, for greater awareness and for the empowerment of partners to respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A highlight was the invitation by KWISA for supper at the Edinburgh Mosque. KWISA helps the advancement of African women and their children living in Scotland and the issues that affect them. Another interesting meeting was the Christianity in Africa Evening Meeting at St Giles, Marchmont, where the Africa & Caribbean Committee discussed in consultation with representatives of the Sub-Saharan Church the rapid growth of the Church there and how to respond to this move of God's Spirit.

At the close of the Assembly we returned to St Andrews to Hope Park and the East Neuk to share something of our life and work with supporting churches. We enjoyed the tented service at Anstruther Harbour and the Presbytery Moderator's installation at St Monans. Midweek we had our Health Check at Carberry and were cleared. It was amazing to realise we had been going there for 20 years.

At the beginning of June we attended the Methodists for World Mission conference at Swanwick called Moving People: Moving Stories. This explored issues of refugees and migration and was a good time for networking. On the way home we called in to see Gregor Sarah and Maja at Ruthin. They will be moving to Cardiff soon where Gregor will begin his full time studies in September. Sarah has also found a new teaching position there too. Two other meetings in June were the African & Caribbean Committee followed by our Debriefing then the World Mission Council Meeting in Dundee. There were also two visits to Houston one to the Service on Sunday and then the Primary Assembly on Wednesday afternoon. It was good too to spend time with Bunmi, Jennie and Valerie to discuss our roles over the next three years at Synod

Our deputation work in Stirling began with traditional Sunday Worship at Ladywell and a more contemporary evening service at St Serfs. Our other visits were mainly other forms of Church which included a Housegroup, Mother, Carer and Toddler Group, Church Café, Midweek Service, Lunch Club and Strawberry Tea. On the final Saturday we attended The Unwritten Letters Project; a photographic exhibition and various gatherings that explored migration stories through word, music, art and song. It ministered to both of us with our large extended family with all its overseas ties. We finished off our Stirling visit with services at Thornhill and Kippen.

We have managed to catch up with most of the family here in Scotland and down South. It has been good too spending time with friends too; on many occasions finding links and connections showing how close the World Christian family is. We are looking forward this month to Heather's Wedding and Euan's Baptism two very special and welcome family occasions to get together. Catriona and Will are at both events too. We then fly back to Lusaka on 25 July.

We give thanks for the opportunities to share something of our lives and work with those who support us both spiritually and materially. We are grateful for the fellowship and good times spent with family and friends. We ask for prayer for travelling mercies as we travel and for wisdom as we continue to prepare our positions for our successors.

With love from

Keith Ida & Mubita