

Dear church friends,

Warm greetings from Zambia in this unusual Christmas season. Despite the constraints we all feel about the usual activities, and not being able to see families and have all the expectations of a normal Christmas, we can still take comfort in that the central message of this season, Emmanuel- God with us, is there no matter what our circumstances.

Zambia is still relatively free of covid, but, although restrictions are still in place, they are generally neglected, so we may experience an upswing soon.

With the dramatic fall in the kwacha (from 15 to 28 to the pound) some of our volunteers at Play4all in Kitwe, are struggling and find it very difficult to make ends meet. We are supporting them each month with enough to buy some basics. Hans, who was abandoned by his mum, and Sana, who's mum died suddenly, also continue to receive a small cash sum for support. Jane is managing the project well and keeps up the feeding programme despite play4all not running as normal. She visits the homes of the children who are on the feeding programme each week with food parcels, and this helps her to check on the kids at home to see how they are doing.

A little of the money donated via Torbain Church Kirkcaldy earlier this year for PPE, went to support Nathan, the young boy who needs dialysis. I spoke with his doctor recently because we had learned one of the major providers of medical supplies to the government had withdrawn from Zambia because there are \$7,200,000 of unpaid bills. (You may have heard on the news, Zambia is in a seriously unsustainable situation and unable to pay the interest on most of their debts.) We managed to buy Nathan 2 lines for emergencies, and are hoping that he will be able to pull through with some medication Bridget managed to find from a private hospital, and a strict diet.



Jane oversaw the completion of the new wall around play4all. The builders used the hand moulded mud bricks common in Zambia



Kabutu and friends farming by hand to help feed vulnerable elderly people in Kandabwe

Something to be thankful for is the good rain we are having this year. After such a prolonged drought which caused a serious price rise in basic foods, people are digging up every spare meter of land in an effort to plant enough grain to help them through the year. They are cultivating along the railway lines and roadside verges, in fact any piece of land that isn't fenced in!

The main thing that has kept me busy through the outbreak has been working with CADRO (Choma Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Organisation). I have been involved in training and planning, and have done some local radio programmes. Last week I was part of a team attending a holiday programme for 80 vulnerable youths to sensitise them about the dangers of alcohol. This month marks 2 years of CADRO's existence and we have an active WhatsApp group, an informative Facebook page as well as regular weekly meetings for recovering alcoholics and counselling / advice for them and their families.

Matemola, a clinical nurse on the Choma hospital mental health ward is another active supporter of CADRO, and he estimates that 70 – 80% of all admissions are for alcohol detox. As previously mentioned, there is now an issue of the hospital not being able to supply the drugs needed to ease people through detox, but they are available to buy privately from a chemist on prescription. Those who cannot afford the medication, can be helped through a grant given to me in 2019 by the Methodist Women in Britain for local community work. Incidentally Matemola is the only other person in the picture wearing a mask!



The CADRO team pose for a photo with a member of Choma council responsible for vulnerable children (far left)

Items for prayer

- For Marita as she struggles with cancer and elephantitis.
- For the many Zambians who will feel the pinch due to the fall of the kwacha against the dollar.
- For Zambian hospitals as they care for their patients despite the government's fiscal difficulties .
- For play4all as we hope to restart our main programme in 2021.

Items for praise

- For the good rains this year.
- For the faithfulness of Kabutu, a former student, and his hard work planting maize to feed the poor in the Kandabwe community .
- For Laurenz' continued support for the Play4all feeding programme.
- For the growth of the CADRO initiative in Choma and beyond.
- For Hans, who is settling in well with one of our play4all volunteers.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and good health and joy in 2021.

Jenny

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