

Dear Church friends,

How quickly time Passes, not only are we are drawing towards the end of the first term, but I am fast approaching my 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of working in Zambia.

This year sees a new class in Food Production, which has 8 students with 2 or 3 joining in July. This venture has involved constructing a catering skills room for practical work. It is well equipped and has 5 cookers for the students to use. This is also the first time we have used the new classrooms for a full time course. We have had a few glitches along the way, but are delighted to be teaching on the new site. Isolation is a problem, but the students take the 10 minute walk to join the main body 2 – 3 times a week for Chapel on Tuesdays, entrepreneurship on Wednesdays and occasional life skills classes.

In order to secure the new college site and stop people building on our land (sadly an all too common practice) our partners in Dortmund have helped us erect a concrete wall and gates around our perimeter. Since the area is quite large this is a 3 – 4 month job, but we are nearly there!

January saw the Play4all 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since five of our young girls did so well in the Gothia cup, we have gained a bit of local fame in Kamatipa, and one of the councillors has helped re-set the swings and climbing frame which have broken out of their concrete moorings because of overenthusiastic use!



*The new wall, looking through the pedestrian access towards the food production classrooms*

Sadly, last September a major incident was triggered at Chodort by the discovery of the equivalent of about 3,000 euro missing from our funds. I found this out the day before our new accountant Mr Muzomder came and we had to involve UCZ headquarters in Lusaka. We called in the synod auditor and he discovered they had also taken out many “loans” from Chodort cash taking it for their own use, and then returning and banking the money up to 2 months later. This lead to the sacking of 2 senior members of staff, one of whom, who was probably the instigator, is still contesting the issue, and it has been an exhausting and demoralising time all round.



*The road to lake Kariba damaged by flood water.*

However, not everything is gloomy! The drought of 4 years has ended and we have had so much rain that at times David’s cottage at the far end of the garden became his castle – surrounded on all 4 sides by water. Walking in the garden at the moment is like walking on a sponge and I leave puddles where my footsteps have been, and, like the Egyptians of old, we also have a plague of frogs, although most of them just a couple of centimetres across. Thankfully we should have a good harvest this year, which will help those who are less well off, as the price of mealie meal should drop. It has doubled in Kitwe from K65 to K120 a 25kg bag (about 12 Euro / 10 pounds) in just over a year.



*2 dugout canoes on the flood plain*

We also are very grateful to our friend in Irish Container Ministries who managed to source 8 laptops to replace the ones in our computer class which were on their last legs. Thanks Willie and the team!

This weekend David, our Bread for the World volunteer, and I are off on a 1,800 Kilometre round trip to Mongu to speak to the folk at Mongu Joinery. We have had an offer from Germany of machines from a factory which is closing down. Their offer is to replace one or two of our ancient

ones in carpentry production and we are going to see if Mongu Joinery can help with transport, as the owner regularly receives containers from Germany.

It is also an opportunity for me to show David round Mongu, the Barotseland capital with a museum next to the kings palace, and a working harbour for 6 months of the year when the water from the Zambezi floodplain, 25 kilometres away, reaches it. I will also take the opportunity to see the Family of the late deaconess Etamboyu who was a friend of mine in Kitwe. She has left 3 school age children who are being supported by her sister.



*1 Mongu Harbour in the dry season*

The journey is a 4 day round trip, as we have to negotiate dirt and sand roads, cross the Kafue River on a rickety pontoon boat and drive 100 kilometres or so up the road next to Kafue National park – once said to be the worst “main” road in Zambia!

Thank you once again for your support, your prayers and continued good thoughts.

### **Items for praise**

- For the raised profile of play4all in Kamatipa
- For the accreditation of the Food Production course
- For the building of the perimeter wall round the new college

### **Items for prayer**

- For the issues around the sacked staff to be resolved.
- For the Food production class to become well established.
- For wisdom in the government to resolve the continuing issues of absolute poverty and unemployment.

With every good wish to you all,

*Jenny*

Jenny Featherstone

Emails [jenny.featherstone@gmail.com](mailto:jenny.featherstone@gmail.com) or [Chodort@gmail.com](mailto:Chodort@gmail.com)

Websites [www.chodort.org](http://www.chodort.org) [www.play4all.org](http://www.play4all.org)