

PARTNERPLAN

The United Church of Zambia
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Dear Family and Friends

The Lord is strength to his people, a safe refuge for his anointed one. Save your people, bless, shepherd and carry them forever. (Psalm 28:8-9)

We are now back in Mwandia after being in Lusaka last week to pick up Ellie from school organize the receipt and transporting to Mwandia of a sterilizer we received from the Beit Cure Hospital who were upgraded by donors and now have a bigger and more modern one. We are grateful to supporters at St Andrews Hope Park and Martyrs for their support with this.

The Covid situation as predicted deteriorated rapidly recently with the onset of the third wave. We have gone from two hundred cases a day at the end May to over 3000 in late June. Deaths are now usually over 50 a day today's toll was sixty-nine. The total deaths are now over 2700. These are deaths in facilities and do not include those deaths from those being cared for at home in the community. A week ago, the UCZ lost a Headteacher in the Copperbelt, we also lost our Secretary at Synod, Mrs Clara Banda and a work colleague lost her husband. A number of our colleagues at Synod have experienced two or more funerals of family members in a very short space of time.

On a more positive note, Ida and I both received our second dose of Astrazeneca and so we are grateful for the extra protection this affords. We continue to work remotely from the house in Mwandia, doing as much as possible by internet.

The United Church of Zambia's Synod Executive Meeting held on the 18th and 19th April 2020 from Kabwe, under the 2021 theme 'All One in Christ.' John 17:21, was a hybrid affair. The Secretariat and Bishop gathered, in person, but spaced and masked with other delegates participating through Zoom.

There was the usual Ordination Service held at St Peter's on the Sunday of the Synod Executive where there were 18 Ordinands. On a more personal note, our son, Gregor, was ordained into the Welsh Anglican priesthood on 26th June at St Asaph' Cathedral. We were able to watch this virtually.



It has been good too to stay connected with our co-workers at the Church of Scotland and other mission partners through two recent reflections that were held. An enjoyable time for discussion fellowship and chatting to catch up as well as dealing with the very current topics of Racism and Human Sexuality.

We were also pleased to hear from the Irish Methodists, Prayer and Care Group and followers of the Methodist Prayer Handbook who all faithfully pray regularly for us; so, we are lifted and upheld in our lives and work here.

As well as spiritual support, we are again so grateful to all of you that help us materially to bless so many different people here, in so many ways. We think of the Church of Scotland Nutrition Programme for malnourished patients. The Formula Programme that has fed and saved so many vulnerable babies.

We had a visit recently from a grandmother with a beautiful, strong, wee boy who had heard that we were back in Mwandu. She was staying with family in the village. She attended Church on the Sunday and gave a wonderful testimony on how the Lord had helped, through the church in stepping in, when her daughter (who has psychiatric problems), was unable to care for the baby. His name is Innocent, and he is 3 years old now. Just one story of many.



Ida managed to hold the Board Meetings for the two Hospitals, but it is technologically too much of a challenge for the more rural and remote clinics to do this. She is still trying to find an NGO or any Government's International Aid Department that will help with the establishment of oxygen plants at Mwandu and Mbereshi and oxygen pipelines at the two UCZ Hospitals and Chitambo. An application has been lodged with the Vice-President's Office.

Keith has been kept busy with his role as Secretary to the Education Secretaries Forum. We had a productive meeting with the Teaching Service Commission following the decentralization of the teacher

recruitment process. He has also been involved in the drafting of a new MOU between Mission Schools and the Government because of likely future radical reform of the Aided Schools Sector and has been scribing for the UCZ Social Media Policy Document.



On Friday was the state funeral of Kenneth Kaunda, the founding father and first President of Zambia. KK, as he was affectionately known, was in power for 27 years. A son of the manse, born at Lubwa Mission, he had many friends in the missionary community. He helped many neighbouring countries in their struggle for Independence, including South Africa in the dismantling of apartheid. He also handed over power gracefully when defeated in the multi-party, democratic elections in 1991. He became a cherished world-renowned elder statesman and a doughty HIV/AIDS activist in his retirement. His passing is the end of an era as he was the last surviving first president regionally of the countries who gained independence in the 1960s.

Further to this on the political scene we pray for a free fair and peaceful election campaign as Zambia goes to the polls on 12 August for Presidential Parliamentary and Local Council elections.

Schools were closed by the Government on 17 June for an initial three weeks to prevent and mitigate the spread of Covid-19. The closure has since been extended until further notice and the statistics make it safe to reopen. Schools are in the meantime expected to put measures in place in readiness for re-opening.

At the same time the UCZ has issued its 4th Pastoral Letter on Covid-19 restricting Sunday Worship Services, Fellowship Meetings, Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms, Holy Communion, Meetings and Workshops. It also urging greater adherence to masking, social distancing, hand sanitizing, avoiding crowd and seeking early medical assistance if symptomatic.

We continue to entrust all things to our Lord, the healer of all our ills, who is ever-present, especially in this time of distress. In faith, hope and love, we pray for and offer comfort to those who mourn. We pray for protection and strength for medical workers, who care for the sick and bring peace to the dying. We pray for wisdom and discernment to our political leaders and a generosity of spirit for us all. With every blessing

Keith Ida Mubita & Ellie

