

PARTNERPLAN

The United Church of Zambia
United Church House
Mosi oa Tunya Road
Box 50122
Lusaka
Zambia

<http://idaandkeith.blogspot.com>
keithida2014@gmail.com

30 April 2021

Dear Family and Friends

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78-79)

We are writing this in Lusaka in the middle of Holy Week. We came up for a number of unavoidable meetings, masked and distanced. Ida was at the Churches Health Association of Zambia's Board Meeting last week, where it was brought home just how vulnerable Zambia still is to a third or even fourth wave of Covid-19 with no vaccine. A vaccine acquisition and deployment programme is ready to be rolled out. We have heard that AZ & Johnson & Johnson vaccines have been earmarked for Zambia, but there is still none in the country and nothing is likely to arrive till well into May. Although Cabinet has approved the two vaccines it is unrealistic to expect even the most vulnerable to all have been vaccinated by the time the predicted third wave arrives with the on-set of the cold season here in June and July. The first 3% of Zambia's allocation, coming through COVAX and planned to arrive in May, will rightly go to Health Care Workers. The objective is to vaccinate 20% of the target population by the end of the year, made up of other key workers, then those over 65 and those with underlying vulnerabilities. There after the programme will then extend to the entire adult population

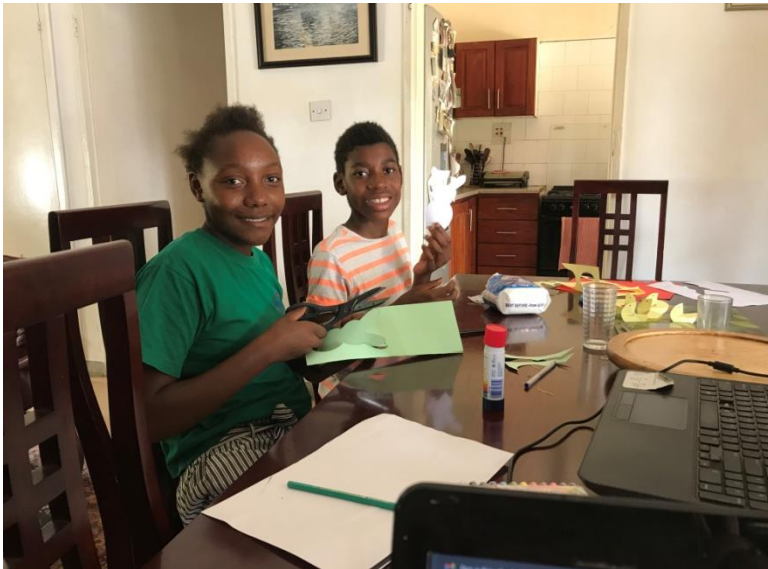
Oxygen is key in managing admitted Covid patients, 84% of admissions require it. Hence, our still fruitless attempts to establish Oxygen Plants at Mwandishi and Mbereshi Mission Hospitals. On a more positive note, the Friends of Chitambo were able to use our concept paper in their successful application to the Scottish Government, who are now convinced of the wisdom of the proposal for hospitals in Zambia to produce their own oxygen, as is the case in Scotland..

Currently, we are relying on oxygen concentrators which are really quite ineffective for patients in a critical state. UCZ Health facilities have treated over 250 hospitalised cases from which we



lost 4 patients, including two mothers, one pregnant and the other with a 5 day old baby. So in these circumstances, our efforts at procuring PPE, oxygen supplies and medicines are all the more urgent. Another consequence of the on-going immunisation programme in the more developed world is that grants for the acquisition of PPE have become less available.

It is indeed, an ill-divided world. Today the UK has already issued 35 million doses of vaccine with nearly 80% of adults covered.



On Maundy Thursday we went to pick up, Ellie at Chengelo. There were no PTA school buses this time. Mubita was looking forward to her home-coming. We will stay over Easter in Lusaka and for Senior Management next week, then return to Mwandia. We will meet and eat together in our family bubble on Easter Sunday at Catriona and Will's. Ruairidh, Fiona and the girls will join us as well. We will facetime our other children and grandchildren when we are all together.

We are busy at the moment collecting statistics and collating updates for our reports. Keith is working mainly on Staffing, Pupil numbers and Examination Analysis. The Synod Executive will be held virtually over the week-end 17-20 April.



Mubita in his new work suit.

The production of cement blocks at the sheltered workshop (The Red Brick Yard) has



commenced. The machine arrived in February and was off-loaded onto a previously prepared slab. The yard has been fenced and a water and electricity supply provided. With David in charge, we have Grant, Roy, Nasilele and Mubita assisting. The first run of bricks was produced yesterday for the semi-detached Doctors' houses; these are being funded by the Beit Trust. This is a first in Mwandia, the production of bricks by machine and with able-bodied and those with vulnerabilities special needs working together. We are especially proud of Roy. He is an orphan raised by his grandmother and gained 11 points in his Grade 12, enough to study medicine. We are hoping he manages, funding permitting, to get a place at a good Government or Christian Medical School.

As we approach Easter we realise that at the heart of the Gospel is God's promise to be with us in our struggles, in the darkness, the injustices we find, the violence and deaths and his bringing us back to life again, giving us life, hope and peace again.

May God bless you this Easter.

With our love

Keith & Ida