The United Church of Zambia

Mwandi Mission

Mwandi

Zambia

September 2014

Dear Family and Friends

**PS 28:7 The Lord is my strength and my shield in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults and with my song I give thanks to him.**

This quarter of the year has quickly passed and has had its usual mix of joys and sorrows. In mid-July Mike Kasoka took a turn for the worse and died in our hospital. He was laid to rest in the Mission graveyard after a comforting and encouraging Church Service. He leaves a large gap both professionally at the hospital and in the family. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Bridget and the family as they look to the future.

At a local meeting Ida was asked by Synod with the support of the community to act as HA for a period of 2 years to stabilise the situation, as Mike was the 7th Administrator in 10 years. She would overlap with the new HA for six months and then to move out.

In July we welcomed Lawrence Kamba, a Zimbabwean, who is the new American Board Representative. He has concentrated on the interior work and the renovations of the Hospital are now nearing completion.

Dr Tembo, whom the Church of Scotland sponsored, is still on Internship but the Church are trying to get him released by December before we go on furlough. As Isaac trained abroad in Tanzania, they are making him do nearly two years, counting leave. We also now have a newly-trained Congolese doctor with us at present.

In late August and early September we took some local leave to visit the family in Malawi. We transported Fiona and Ruairidh’s three cats, overnighting in Lusaka. They have since settled well. We had a good week with them and the grandchildren. We mostly did domestic things: Ida took the hems of the curtains up while Keith creosoted wood and staked tomatoes. It was a good relaxing week but a long drive there and back.

Kirsten is fine. She and Stu have just sold their flat and bought a house with a garden, little Iona loves the new freedom. It is only 10 minutes by train to Strathclyde and the Merchant City.

Gregor and Sarah are well. Gregor has done well, completed his first year of Theology with the Welsh Anglicans and is learning Welsh.

Catriona is just starting her final year of History at King’s College and her parents have managed to survive the high costs of living and accommodation in London. She is looking for a Saturday job. She would like to go on and do her masters but we are suggesting she takes a year out first.

Mubita is fine, growing tall and glad to have Bridget back for home-schooling.

We still have also the four Congolese boys, Ornelle, Omeri, Omedy and Omari with us. Synod has been working on our behalf to try and get the parents released early. We have been told that they may be considered for release next month at Independence. We have enjoyed having a big family, but it is time for them to be a family again. We hope that they are released as we go home on furlough in December. Please pray for this.We are looking forward to having the family for Christmas. We have been allocated a flat in Comely Bank.

We have had our usual round of Northern Hemisphere summer visitors. We hosted Gill Dascombe and her husband for a weekend in July. Gill is this year’s Methodist Vice-President, the leading lay representative of the Church. It was good to share a little of our life and work here with Gill and Mike and that they could meet local friends and colleagues.

The United Church of Zambia met with international partners for a two-day Conference on 17 & 18 July in Kabwe. This was a follow-up to a previous meeting held in July 2011 and was a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan as part of the mutual commitment of walking together. It was an opportunity for presentation dialogue feedback and reflection.

Participants included representatives from the Geneva Church, Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church, US Board of Trustees, World Renew, Gossner Mission and Council for World Mission. Representing the UCZ were Synod officials, the Bishops and Members of Church Committees. Keith and Ruairidh attended. Keith has recently been appointed to serve as Synod World Partnership Convenor and Ruairidh represented World Renew. After the meeting Jean Fischer joined us at Mwandi for a few days.

Ida has also been kept busy in the theatre with another team of surgeons under Peggy Schrieber from Colorado visiting and performing much needed procedures. They did 30 operations. This was followed by Richard Griffin, an eye-specialist from North Carolina, who came with a team. They saw 962 clients and gave out 608 sets of glasses in a week.

During this time Ida was called to a Caesarean Section as twins were expected, however, triplets, two healthy boys and a girl were delivered. This was the mothers 6th pregnancy already having had two sets of twins.

We are very grateful to Ronnie Sinclair from St Andrews Presbytery for all his effort in

obtaining for us a resuscitaire and a double oxygen concentrator. Both are in the theatre and have been a godsend for our C-Sections, helping too improve the standard of the theatre.

There are also a number of other irons in the fire, these too require prayer. Keith has applied to the Beit Trust for a fourth classroom block. They will meet shortly to consider applications so we should hear in October. This is much needed accommodation for the new Grade 8 & 9 classes.

The water tank is being erected at Sikuzu while we wait for the last of the surface water to evaporate before we cap the well. Unfortunately we did not receive the pump we were expecting from Australia so another solar option is being investigated.

With support from individuals and Churches worldwide we have managed to build the verandas and ramps at Kandiana. We have removed the flaking plaster and hard cast the walls. We have also managed to build a shelter (situngu) for the residents to gather together and sit in. There are still funds remaining to paint the exterior.

The building of the Church at Magumwi is now progressing again after the collapse of a number of pillars and the end of the farming season. Dornoch have helped them to procure window and door frames as well as roofing materials which they were unable to afford after the crisis with the columns falling down.

School has started again and Keith is back teaching 8C Maths and Science and 8B Maths. We also have Lisa staying with us, who has come through the Church of Scotland. She is the daughter of friends and hopes to study medicine, so she will be with Ida in the hospital for much of the time.

The cold dry season has gone and the day and night time temperatures are rising. The grass is dry, dead leaves and the water levels are falling and the sky is tinged with the blue smoke from the bush fires. In our lives here, we wake now to the warm joy of each day, containing its pleasures and successes along with its toil and difficulties. The windows of our life here look out on the needs of the world and so with the will and strength from above, we bring, with your help and prayers, the gift of gladness to others, so that together we can bear each others burden, throughout the heat of the day.

With love and every blessing

Keith, Ida & Mubita