

The United Church of Zambia
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Dear Family and Friends

And he shall be the one of peace. Micah 5:5

Both of us were busy in October with Board Meetings. Ida at Masuku, where the water project is now almost complete and at Njase, where Leah, the Church of Bangladesh Mission Partner, is finishing her time with the UCZ and moving to Lusaka with the family. They hope to settle permanently in Zambia. At Jagaimo in the UNHCR Camp for refugees our Clinic struggles with an increased catchment and decreased funding and supplies of medicine. We are grateful for the help we received towards this. Through church links we were able to have the medicines flown into Solwezi at no cost. Another cause for celebration was the official return to the United Church of Zambia of Lubwa Clinic from the Government.

The work at Mbereshi to complete the Lab and the Ward refurbishment continues with a Lusaka Consistory supporting the rehabilitation of the Children's Ward. This followed Ida sharing these needs at two services on HIV/AIDS Sunday. With the same consistory, Ida paid a visit to Ebenezer Congregation, an underserved rural congregation, where an application to Discovery Health is underway, to open a congregationally-based rural Health Post.

Keith held a successful one-day conference for School Chaplains to discuss their roles, their challenges and successes in fellowship, as spiritual care-givers to pupils, teachers, support-staff and the wider community.

In the interests of economy we both combined our tour to the North. We paid a courtesy call this time at Chitambo Hospital, a former Church of Scotland Mission Hospital. At Lubwa Keith met with the School Board while Ida carried out a fact-finding visit to the Hospital. At Mwenzo, Ida again made an exploratory visit to the Clinic. On the way to Senga Hill we overnighted in Mbala, where the First World War only ended on 24 November 1918. It took almost two weeks for the news to reach Northern Province, where the German Army under Von Lettow-Vorbeck was still advancing towards Chambeshi. We spent the weekend at Mbereshi, followed by the school and Hospital Board Meetings on the Monday and Tuesday.

It has been a busy time too at the office. Although the November Synod Executive was curtailed, with a reduced Secretariat and only Bishops and Presbytery Secretaries attending; reports were presented and its business was achieved.

The Finance Committee met before the Synod's Annual Planning Meeting in early December which was followed by a Celebratory Brunch at the new Synod Headquarters (United Church

House). We are waiting for the electrical connection to be made before we finally move in at the beginning of the New Year.

After church and mission meetings in Mwandu, the General Secretary, Vice Chancellor of the UCZ University, Ida and I were invited from Synod to be part of the official reception and welcome for the 88 Evangelists, 2 Reverends and drivers from Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa. It was a most enjoyable evening. They left the next day for Sefula, Mongu and Lealui. They then visited Senanga and Mwandu on the way back where they were warmly received. A number were interested especially in Evangelist Eleazer, the first Basotho Evangelist who began the work at Mwandu in 1878. There is a plaque to his memory in the old church at Mwandu. We presented the group with 2 copies of The Spread of the Gospel in Barotseland and a framed picture of the Keleke ya Lesotho Mission Group of 1884 and an itinerary of the route from Leribe to Sefula with maps.

Last weekend we attended the Wedding of Kalumba & Brighton Gondwe. Brighton is the nutritionist, who runs the Church of Scotland HIV Nutrition Programme. The reception in Lusaka followed the marriage service at Chainama SDA Church. As guest of honour Ida was asked to give a few words to the newly-wed couple taken from her 40 year experience of married life!

We are tying off loose ends this week, before the Synod Office closes on Friday for the Christmas and New Year Holiday. In Zambia at this time of year many people take their main leave, so businesses and traffic are not quite so busy or heavy at the moment. However, there will be the usual rush just before Christmas in the banks, at ATMs and in the shops and supermarkets.

As we look towards Bethlehem, this season of Advent provides us as Christians with a new beginning and many opportunities on our journey through life. As we look back to the past year with all its difficulties and challenges, we also look forward to the new, bringing hope and peace with justice.

As a Church, the UCZ continues to be a place of hope for Zambia and the world, sharing our peace with its peoples and at home in national reconciliation. On our journey, we look to the birth of Jesus, and rejoice at the significance of the Incarnation - God with us, walking beside us, the Prince of Peace.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and all the best in the coming year.

With our love

Keith Ida & Mubita.