

PARTNERPLAN

Keith & Ida Waddell - Zambia January 2021

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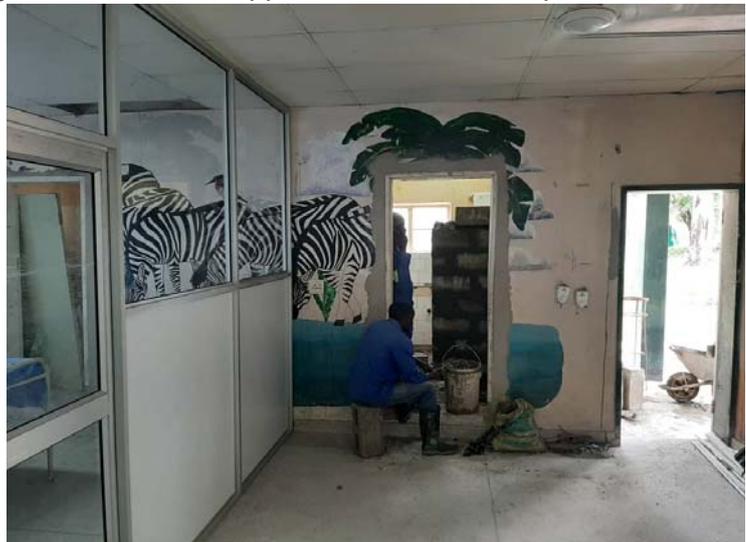
Dear Family and Friends

“The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with great singing” Zeph 3:17

Since we last wrote we have been splitting our time between Mwandia and Lusaka, as well as travelling around the country for our school and hospital board meetings. In the interests of economy and safety we combined our trips and travelled together.

We were due to hand over our positions as Education and Health Secretaries to our successors, but with Covid-19 adversely affecting UCZ finances, the offering has reduced by around 40%, we have been asked to continue in post till August when suitable individuals should be found and appointed. This has meant that our new jobs as Mission Support for Health and Special Needs at Mwandia have been put on hold in the meantime.

This is just one of the consequences and issues arising when dealing with the new normal. These are, without doubt, challenging times for us all personally, our families and at work, but the Advent verse above reminds us of ‘Emmanuel - God is with us’ amidst all the uncertainties and changes when things don’t seem to be going smoothly and pressures and troubles lead to a long season of waiting. He is our refuge and strength, our Lord and Saviour going before us and shining as a pure light against the dark sky.



The latest Covid statistics for yesterday showed 1,029 confirmed new cases with 18 deaths and 369 recoveries.

This is second wave which is the more virulent South African version. There are 7 cases in Mwandia, 6 of whom are staff, out of 48 tests. 8 at Chipembi with 3 members of staff from Njase

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Clinic; one of whom transferred to Levy Mwanawasa Covid treatment centre. The work to convert the old TB ward at Mwandu to a Covid treatment centre just finished earlier this week and with the cases there it was perfect timing. The Government continues to test though swabs and rapid test kits are in short supply in places. With the rise in numbers the facilities are under increasing pressure to try and avoid as steep a curve as in the first wave. It is also hindered by the lack of tests made available to Zambia by WHO.

We have still had no success with the applications for the oxygen plants but each of the UCZ health institutions has through a variety of donations received an oxygen concentrator and while we are grateful for this type of temporary assistance, we will continue with the work to find a more long-lasting solution with the oxygen plants. We also received a much-needed small steriliser from the East Neuk which is now in Mwandu, however a larger one is still much needed for the surgeries.

We are grateful for the Covid-care ward mentioned above, with thanks to Zambian, Scottish and Irish well-wishers. We are trying too to acquire a brick and paving machine as an income-generator for the sheltered workshop programme. The Beit Trust has agreed to build two semi-detached houses for the doctors at Mwandu.

Much of our work has been the usual human resource matters: transfers, unpaid grants from Government, interviews, meetings and questions over medical staff on study leave. Both of us handed over our offices as Convenor and Secretary of the Synod World Partnership Committee after our terms before the Synod Executive. Ida has continued to supply the front-line workers with PPE using funds generously donated by a number of different churches.

Regarding the proposed education statutory instrument after representations to the Government from the churches affected, it is now unlikely to be presented to Parliament till after next year's election; so a breathing space has been gained there.

In October and November Ida and I visited our 15 schools, 7 clinics and 2 hospitals. The meetings were masked and distanced and the usual health and educational items covered. The non-examination classes returned to schooling in September. One misfortune was having our laptops stolen from our room in Nakonde. The Police fortunately recovered Ida's. We started our meetings with Central and Lusaka Provinces then moved to Southern followed by Western, This fell in with half-term for Ellie, so we dropped her off on our way to Muchinga, Northern and Luapula.

On our return we stayed a day in Mkushi as Ida had to help inspect a health facility that had applied for membership of CHAZ. We rose early the next morning and reached Kabwe in time for the synod finance committee meeting prior to the opening of the Synod Executive where we presented the annual reports for health and education on Sunday. This is similar to the General Assembly.

The UCZ chose as its theme for 2021, its motto, 'All One in Christ.' John 17:21, in light of the forthcoming Tri-partite elections next year. This is to stress the need for national unity in face of increasing political polarisation and underscores the national motto; "One Zambia One Nation", where all citizens are equals before the law and that are human beings made in God's image regardless of race, tribe, gender, class or religion.

This was the first synod executive attended by the Synod Bishop as Chair and the new General Secretary Rev Chipasha Musaba.

We enjoyed the Christmas and the New Year break which we spent with the family in Lusaka. Before that we both had work to do. Keith had interviews to organise to fill vacant slots for Heads

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and Deputies and Ida to attend a workshop run by USAID-Discovery Health on policy development regarding safe-guarding in health institutions.

During the Christmas period both Ruairidh and Cora contracted Covid-19 and were in isolation. Cora was not badly affected but Ruairidh was chesty for a few days followed by Covid-toes. Today his test was thankfully negative.

In the prevailing circumstances we are working from home as much as possible and only leaving the house to shop for food or pay for electricity, phones or internet. These things still cannot be done easily by internet here. We are waiting to hear from the Government whether the schools will open on 18 January or not.

This letter is late and an adaptation of an earlier version as the elderly computer I was using crashed just before Christmas and I only got it back earlier this morning. At the same time our new vehicle to replace the old trusty Prado that served us for over 10 years finally was released by Toyota Zambia. It is a Hilux Raider which will serve us well in our work. Funds were sent by the Church of Scotland for it some time ago but Covid and the closing of the borders delayed its coming. The picture shows it being blessed by the Synod Bishop.

We hope you and your loved ones had a blessed Christmas and we wish you all the best for the coming year.

With our love

Keith, Ida & Mubita

