

PARTNERPLAN

Gary Brough - Malawi May 2024

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Dear Friends,

The rainy season is ending in Malawi. Here in Mzuzu, in the hilly north, we're still getting regular showers as we move into the cold season. Our big jumpers are out now that some days the temperature hovers as low as 20 degrees C. Can you imagine?!

However, President Chakwera announced a state of disaster last month since El Nino weather patterns have meant prolonged dry spells and devastated crops across the country. An estimated 2 million farming households and as much as 50% of crops are thought to have been affected. It's similar in Zambia and Zimbabwe, where presidents have made similar declarations.

I've been travelling a lot in the last few months. Views from the driver's seat show the harsh reality as I've passed mile after mile of decimated fields. This is on the heels of currency devaluation, steep inflation, and the continued recovery from Cyclone Freddy. These macro-level events don't sum up life in Malawi, but they do cast a long shadow on everyday life for Malawians.

Earlier in the year, our tree-planting project in Blantyre distributed trees to farmers to help protect their land from soil erosion. The postgraduate centre building project is nearing the beginning of construction works (and concerted fundraising efforts). Hopefully, some future students will research the overlap between theology and climate change. Synods in Malawi are gearing up to engage with the 2025 elections process. In the same way churches in the UK have opened foodbanks and warm spaces, so the church in Malawi responds at high- and grassroots-level to the realities of life.

Some of my travels have been further afield, including trips to Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian has five synods – Livingstonia, Nkhoma and Blantyre in Malawi, Harare (Zimbabwe) and Zambia. The purpose of the visit was to appreciate the current work and context that each synod faces and to see how the CCAP General Assembly could support. Both synods are experiencing growth and supporting evangelism was a common theme as I visited presbyteries, congregations, prayer houses, departments, and theological colleges.

Harare Synod



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The hosting team from the Synod secretariat and Bulawayo Presbytery. A new church building in the centre of Harare. A primary school on the edge of Harare where the Synod is trying to expand and redevelop to relieve pressure on overcrowded classrooms.

Synod of Zambia



Kanele congregation in Lundazi, Zambia, was planted just three months ago. Nearby, the Synod is preparing to hand over a new clinic to the Ministry of Health. The Synod's theological college enjoys a peaceful, remote location which is suitable for reflection but a challenging posting for the faculty.

Being at home with the family for a longer stretch this month is good. It's hard to believe we're now into the last term of the school year. The girls are thriving. Caitlin now goes to a childminder, a friend from church, a couple of days a week. Jacqueline is adjusting to this rediscovered freedom!

There are busy months ahead with the final instalment of the Emerging Leaders Programme, preparations for CCAP's centenary celebrations, a visit from the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, expansion of the tree planting, and a series of workshops and a conference for women. All of this leads us to our trip to Scotland to reconnect with supporting congregations, presbyteries, and our family and friends.

Thanks, as always, for your interest, support and prayers.

Every blessing,

Gary, Jacqueline, Eilidh, Morven and Caitlin

Prayer Points

We are giving thanks for...

- Growth in the church in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- A positive visit to Zambia and Zimbabwe and opportunities for more interactions between the synods.
- A good time together as a family over the Easter break - including a hilltop camp in a thunderstorm!

Please pray with us for...

- The difficult food situation across Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- Gearing up for a busy spell of project works
- A good final term at school for the girls

