

PARTNERPLAN

Gary Brough - Malawi September 2023

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Dear Friends,

The weather is hotting up here in Mzuzu. Temperatures are topping 30°C for most of the week. We're in the cooler, hilly north of the country but it's still a month or two until we expect the hottest weather. These temperatures are not uncommon in the UK now, though we visited for a Scottish summer in July and seemed to miss it all together. We are grateful for the chance to reconnect with family and friends and enjoy a week at the Keswick Convention.

The change of weather is another reminder that the year is marching ahead. When I last wrote I had recently visited southern Malawi, where communities were devastated by Cyclone Freddy. We were there again last month to distribute roofing materials thanks to donations from Overton Parish Church and other international partners.

The CCAP General Assembly has supported the rehabilitation of 20 homes in Migowi and Chiuta Presbyteries, in an area of Southern Malawi that was hit hard by Cyclone Freddy. Local congregations identified vulnerable households and mobilised the other materials needed. A local congregant provided transport of materials from Blantyre. The presbyteries arranged for young people with bicycles to get the materials to each home. Great to see the impact of the church working together locally and globally. Praise God!



Church leaders and some of the community members benefitting from rehabilitation support

The road to recovery is long and slow, particularly in the current economic climate. We noticed the difference in supermarket prices during our short visit to the UK, however the hike on our return to Malawi after only a few weeks was perhaps larger. A shortage of forex to support imports of fuel, medicines and supplies for vital infrastructure projects is hitting Malawi hard. It is also making it

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hard to source fertilisers and so food prices are being pushed higher and higher. This is the context in which the church is serving.

There's a lot to be thankful for, when we take the time to stop and think. That includes our gratitude to those of you who read these updates and join our work in prayer. We're grateful to God for our partnership with you - thanks!



We're glad that the girls have settled in well to a new school year. There is always a fair amount of change in the classes each year as jobs and other commitments lead families to move. We're mindful of the impact that all this transition has on the girls and appreciate your prayers for them. Caitlin is now very much walking. It seemed like, though the skills were all there, last month was when she decided to put them to use. Now there is no stopping her!

After many months of planning, advertising, recruitment and preparations the Emerging Leaders Programme got off to a very positive start. I could see God's many provisions in the logistics for the event, the positive relationships formed in the group and the meaningful conversations we had together. Please pray for our group as they begin to put things into practice in their workplaces and join online workshops until we meet again in November. Until I can introduce them more fully, here is a run-down of our first cohort so that you can pray for each of them:



- Leah - a project manager and child protection officer from Livingstonia Synod Church and Society Programme
- Thoko - a project manager from Blantyre Synod's Health and Development Commission
- Isaac - project officer in Nkhoma Synod's Youth Department and youth theatre coordinator
- Hope - project officer in Nkhoma Synod's Youth Department
- Lloyd - Head of HR and reverend within Zambia Synod
- Tanazio - Coordinator of Blantyre Synod's Student ministry
- Gilbert - Programmes Manager for Livingstonia Synod Aids Programme
- Robert - Presbytery Youth coordinator and reverend within Harare Synod, Zimbabwe
- Glory - Librarian at Zomba Theological University.



During our first in-person gathering the group visited Dzaleka refugee camp. The camp was meant to be home to 10,000 refugees but until recently the population was over 50,000. That has now swollen to an estimated 60,000 following a forced relocation exercise by the government of any refugee living outside of the camp.

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Malawi is a signatory of various international instruments and commitments. However, it falls short of many standards around integration and freedoms of refugees. Like in the UK, the political rhetoric towards those fleeing conflict, violence and persecution is widely inaccurate and dehumanising.

Our aim for the visit was to allow our group to draw their own conclusions from real conversations, in a dignified, two-way exchange of information. They sat with people who have been awaiting their application processing for decades, who are three or more generations from those who fled their home country, who are trying to make a dignified living to provide for their families.

Looking ahead to the coming months, with funding for the trees project now in place for two Synods, please pray for the work of launch and coordination of this project. I plan to visit Blantyre during November to help develop the marketing plan for the nursery there –

getting to put my academic studies into practice. In October, I'll go to Zomba Theological University as the post graduate building project should have completed the planning stage and we will be looking at funding and logistics to start the renovation and building works.

Jacqueline maintains her link with Mzuzu Crisis Nursery and Family Centre, mostly through friendship and support of the nursery manager, Anna. Please pray for Anna as she grieves the loss of her father this month. Jacqueline was able to travel to attend the village funeral and we pray she can continue to be a friend and support to Anna and the wider ministry.

When we stop and reflect, perhaps the challenges seem greater than before. Perhaps resources look smaller than before. How great a comfort it is to know that He is always greater:

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. – Ephesians 3:20-21

As ever, thanks for your continued prayer and friendship.

Gary, Jacqueline, Eilidh, Morven and Caitlin x