

PARTNERPLAN

Keith & Ida Waddell - Zambia October 2023

The United Church of Zambia
Mwandi Mission
Box 60693
LIVINGSTONE
Zambia

keithida2014@gmail.com

Dear Family and Friends

For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you." Isaiah 41:13

We look back on another eventful three months with its joys, troubles and without saying we can always find exact analogies to our circumstances and those of our Lord and his followers, we can recognise that, they are nonetheless an example to us and in them we can find some understanding and take comfort.

At the beginning of June, we said farewell to Sandy Sneddon who took over from Jennie Chinembiri, our former line-manager. Sandy also visited us in Mwandi in 2007, prior to our becoming Church of Scotland Mission Partners. He handed us over to Ian Alexander, whom we have known too, for a long time. It was agreed then that our mid-term furlough and deputation could be moved forward to the end of April to July 2024, due to work commitments here in Mwandi. We wish Sandy a long and happy retirement.

A major success is that following a surprise snap visit by the Health Professional Council of Zambia's Inspection Team, the mission hospital was granted Provisional Level 2 status. This will be officially confirmed, once a few 'doable' requirements are undertaken. This is something very close to Ida's heart and she has worked steadily with the team here on infrastructure and organisation, to put things in place so that this goal was reached. A mission hospital offering specialities will bring greatly needed secondary and some tertiary care much closer to ordinary people here.

Good progress has been made too, with the construction of the new x-ray suite. The Minister of Health promised the hospital a new digital machine at a meeting earlier this year she held with Ida, the local MP and hospital administrator.

We had a visit to for a week in June by Thomas Leichtle who is a hydrologist from Germany. He looked at how the mission could dispose of waste water safely as we move away from septic tanks and soakaways. The permanent and immediate solution suggested, would be a decentralised wastewater treatment system that could service the entire Hospital. We are pursuing this through a company suggested by the German Embassy.

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As you may be aware, we are an ecumenical appointment with the Methodist Church, as is Fiona Kendall and Gina Oliver. The Methodist Church and Conference agreed this year to phase out the employment of lay Mission Partners, who will all be made redundant by August 2024 as part of a comprehensive and radical belt-tightening exercise. However, clergy will still be offered to partner churches. As you can imagine this came as a dreadful blow to our Methodist colleagues, with serious personal and professional implications; one medical colleague has two and a half years to retirement age and another two families will have their children's schooling disrupted.

At half-term we were able to get Ellie a more modern state of the art artificial leg. It is customised to fit and has a flexible foot. She is 'running it in' this half term and during the October holidays we will take her back to the clinic for the finishing touches. It is a much-improved version and gives her much greater mobility and freedom of movement. Our thanks to all who contributed to make this possible. Ellie is now in Form 4 and was appointed as a monitor in the junior girl's hostel.

Verna Case with her Davidson Pre-Med Students came back after a three-year Covid-induced absence. In the late afternoon, after working on their research and papers two of the more athletic students came and took Mubita jogging with them. This daily event was anticipated greatly by Mubita. We also enjoyed a visit from our old friend Tammy, who was able to help us in our life and work in a number of areas, especially with counselling.

Another accomplishment concerns Sambai from Kandiana, with regular cleaning and dressing, Ida has managed to reduce markedly the size of his swollen leg, the sores have shrunk in size too. Again, thanks to generous support from faithful friends we can now give Catherine more of the support she needs to feed and care for the residents, with another carer. Sepiso and she make a good team.



In August Ida travelled with the other Mwandi members of the Women's Christian Fellowship Western Presbytery Choir to the Synod Music Festival held at St Mark's Church in Chilenge. They sang well and held their own against the bigger Presbyteries such as Lusaka and Copperbelt. However, the fellowship fun and music were more important than the competition.

We reported in our last letter that the Royal Bank of Scotland had frozen our accounts on 17 January as we were according to them 'non-doms'. To have our money transferred to a new bank account we had to prove our identity by having our passports verified by a Commissioner of Oaths (Public Notary). We have submitted to the Reclaims Department, stamped verifications from the hospital administrator, local magistrate, Church of Scotland Legal Department (rejected as non-Zambian!), Livingstone High Court, UCZ Admin Secretary who is a gazetted Commissioner and finally the British High Commission lawyer, who is also registered in England and Wales. None of them are acceptable as Zambia does not have an on-line registry of

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Commissioners of Oaths but the Law Association of Zambia does have a telephone! On the 14 September the RBS finally transferred our money to our new bank account. Our grateful thanks to all concerned.

We have recently received other good news from the Czech Embassy regarding an earlier application. Their small-scale project programme have sent funds to for the hospital to upgrade 10 critical care beds with lighting, electricity, telecommunication, oxygen and suction outlets. A suction machine is also being provided which will provide a centralised medical vacuum system. The Ambassador was supposed to visit us earlier this week but they had an accident on the way and had to return to Livingstone. Thankfully there were no serious injuries.

On Sunday the American surgical team arrived to do another round of operations. We managed to achieve 57 Surgeries, of which 37 were major cases. 119 patients were also seen by the medical consultant. The Mwandia community are very grateful for this intervention by the American team. Thanks to friends and supporting churches mainly in Scotland, we have been able to supply necessary medicines which are not available from Government Medical Stores here. Gowns, gloves and hand-sanitiser too that were sent are much appreciated. There has also been a steady stream of parcels with baby clothes from Houston, East Neuk and Kincardine, our thanks to those who knit and natter. It has been good to hear too from the new Fife Presbytery. Again, faithful support from Aiken and others allows the milk formula programme to continue, helping mothers and grandmothers to feed babies in need.

Another sad event was the passing of His Royal Highness, Chief Inyambo Yeta who served as Vice-President and helped draft the constitution. He took active steps to protect and preserve the environment and wildlife. He pushed to develop the area, the mission hospital, electrification, secondary education, agriculture and fisheries. He modernised the Kuta by appointing women and younger Ndunas. All his work and care for his people was done humbly and overarched by his strong Christian faith.

As regards the sheltered workshop, we continue to supply blocks for the infrastructure development at the hospital. At the moment there is a staff house and the x-ray suite under construction. It continues to struggle to meet increasing costs. Fuel rose last month by 15% which affect delivery costs and in-puts such as cement. It is a similar story with the layers due to a similar hike in the price of maize which affects our feed. We have ordered a new batch of day-old layers but are still on the waiting list to receive. Our present layers have another 4 months or so before their production reduces substantially. We have also harvested the first of our fish. Our market is limited as it is difficult to compete with the price of river fish. The garden is flourishing with green vegetables and its fruit trees continue to grow.

In early September we organised a workshop with CADRO for 20 young people in Mwandia, including all the sheltered workshop employees, and 25 in Lipumpu mostly the rice growers. The workshop dealt with substance abuse, climate change and how to make sustainable charcoal using biomass. The charcoal was also used to make biochar which helps to improve soil structure. Briquettes can now be produced at household level and

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biochar applied to the family fields. This program is run by a friend and former colleague Jenny Featherstone.



Ruairidh and Fiona arrived in Chang Mei on Sunday and the girls began school on Monday. Both Lucy and Cora will be able to continue with their golf there. Kirsten and Stuart's new extension is now almost completed bar finishing touches. Iona is busy painting her new room.



We enjoyed a visit from Gregor, Sarah the girls and Judy (Nain - Welsh for Granny). They spent time here at Mwandi, where Gregor preached and celebrated Communion on the Sunday and stayed in Lusaka with Ruairidh and Catriona's families. We also scattered some of mum and dad's ashes here, as was their wish. It was good too to spend a few days in Chobe amongst the wildlife there.

Catriona's two are doing well. Madeleine has just started full-time pre-school and Hugo learned to crawl yesterday! Mubi continues to help in the sheltered workshop and joins his friends in Grade 8A for sport and PE twice a week. He enjoys it and is made very welcome there.

Reading back our letter is quite an epistle this time, but much has happened and it gives an insight into our still rich and varied life and work here. We appreciate so much your prayers and support in these times of difficulty and uncertainty.

With love from

Keith, Ida & Mubita