

30 June 2025

The United Church of Zambia
Mwandi Mission
Box 60693
LIVINGSTONE
Zambia

Email: keithida2014@gmail.com

Dear Family and Friends

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13

At the moment our world seems even more unstable than usual, with various places ablaze and with suffering and death in abundance. This brings us to point to a different way, the way of love, of Christ who sacrificed himself for us and for the world to bring about salvation from war and hatred.

Last week we passed the June solstice meaning our time of daylight will start to increase again. At 17 Degrees South there is only ever really at the most an hour's difference between both the hours of sunrise and sunset. Now over halfway through the year!

Earlier this month, A bumper harvest of 3.7 million tonnes of maize is forecast for Zambia. This should give a surplus of over 501,000 tonnes, far exceeding the nation's food security threshold and paving the way for potential exports. If traded honestly and justly this should lead to a fall in the commodity price and cheaper mealie meal. However, if what has happened with the electricity, happens to the maize.....? Zambia continues with 19 hours of no electricity and ZESCO sells the 'excess' electricity overseas because they get more money that way, than supplying the Zambian consumer; then clearly there will be no substantial reduction in price either, if the surplus maize is sold and exported, like the electricity!

The 90 days have elapsed since the USAID freeze and it seems now that the aid cuts will impact HIV prevention in Mwandi, leaving mainly vulnerable adults at risk. The PEPFAR provision of preventative drugs is now apparently limited to mother-to-child transmission. The government will struggle to fund HIV prevention, which risks a resurgence of deaths from HIV/AIDS that had been kept at bay by near universal access to ART. The extent will become clearer as time progresses. 12 people will lose their Jobs in Mwandi District. This too will cause staffing shortages and loss of expertise on our HIV program. Taking care and medicine to the Mwandi District is no longer funded.

Just before Easter, we had the usual American Surgical Team where Ida helped scrub for 63 operations, 16 thyroidectomies, general surgery and gynaecology. I travelled up by bus to Lusaka to speak at a Scripture Union Camp. My identity in Christ was the theme based on Ephesians 2 10. I enjoyed the time there very much. So refreshing to be amongst the 324 youngsters, all eager and enthusiastic with a great love for Christ.



We continue to run Art Therapy for the Mental Health Department. The challenge is always to find a suitable place that is free. The Chapel is often used for trainings and meetings. A custom-built area is now a pressing necessity



The One stop Centre is almost complete, the final painting should be done before the end of the month. The sponsored walk went well and we are still gathering funds in. We have raised over K100,000 enough to get the foundation started. The walk was good for staff morale and showed the Community what they can do when working together.

We received some good news about the truck we want to purchase to help reduce transport and supply costs. We have almost reached our £12 000 target and are now pricing to get a more exact idea of the cost to put it on the road.

We have a regular supply of baby clothes from a variety of different Knit and Natter groups. It makes such a difference to babies being born in the hospital to gift them with a set of knitted set of hat cardigan bootees and mittens, especially at this cold season.



The work on Mary Nyambe's house is almost complete and Mary is delighted with it and is now moving in.



Before



Mary Nyambe Just one more coat of paint to finish

We are grateful too for our annual visit from Arthur Cox and their support. HATW continue to sponsor nursing scholarships and have agreed to build some new latrines at Sikuzu Primary. Through a Chilean Christian NGO we will receive two Doctors as volunteers for 11 months to help with the establishment of more specialised services at the hospital.

It was good to follow this year's General Assembly on the link on the webpage. We enjoyed its ecumenical nature and followed the debates on Assisted Dying Gaza and establishing financial sustainability. We wish Carol Finlay all the best in her retirement. Her support as a valued member of the World Mission Team was always much appreciated by us. Her hard work with partnerships, often behind the scenes will be remembered too. Our friendship with Carol goes a long way back as she and Ida were in the Newburgh Guides together!

We were saddened to hear of the death of Greg Jeanne in April who was so instrumental in fund-raising for the Sikuzu. A plaque and cross is being mounted there to his memory. We lost just yesterday Mr Mubiana who was the Deputy at the Basic School when I arrived in 2004. He then served as Headteacher till he retired in 2009. We also lost Steve Bannister a dear colleague from Chengelo to cancer last week. The death in South Africa of the 6th President of Zambia Edgar Chabwa Lungu was announced on June 5th.



Ellie has continued to explore the possibility of joining the Zambian Para-Olympic squad. She is the first athlete to have a running blade and has been given two trainers. She will continue with her swimming and also work on her running.



On 8th May we received a visit from a mother and child who went through the Formula for Life Programme. The family wanted to thank us for helping little Sepo

We continue to contribute to Kandiana through supporting Churches. The number of residents has now risen to four. We have started turning one wing of Kandiana into a safe haven for GBV. We have done necessary plumbing repairs and have fixed a toilet cabinet to each resident's room and have bought 4 chests of drawers for their belongings. We continue to help with 2 salaries for carers and a monthly grant for upkeep.

At the end of May we had a weekend away in the Kafue National Park to celebrate Ida's 70th birthday and Catriona and Will's Wedding Anniversary. We had a good time on the river and game-viewing. This once again showed how small the world is. The Game Scout at the entrance gate of the National Park was the son-in-law to Rev Sipalo, who lives here in Mwandi and the Receptionist at the Lodge was the daughter of a local Mwandi family too, the Londos.

We plan to arrive in Scotland on Saturday the 8th of November and spend December and January there, returning to Zambia on the 8th of February 2026. It looks as if our Furlough flat will be in Springfield street in Leith. We will start soon on our deputation program.

As we close we give thanks for stable governance and the growing economy which should lead to rising living standards, particularly for the most poor. We continue to pray for food security for the vulnerable, especially in these times of climate change, an end to political and economic corruption the short-sighted and destructive exploitation of resources and of people.

With our love

Keith, Ida & Mubita.

