

## PARTNERPLAN

# Keith & Ida Waddell - Zambia March 2025

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Dear Family and Friends

**Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities. Then you will be known as a rebuilder of walls and a restorer of homes. Isaiah 58:12**

We had a good family time over Christmas and New Year in a very beautiful part of Thailand. As well as enjoying being part of the lives of our children and grandchildren by visiting their school, and the local sights; we were also warmly welcomed by the local Church of Christ in Thailand. They invited us to lunch; we worshipped with them and were invited to a social time with their mission partners, mainly from South Korea. In this part of Thailand, around Chiang Mai, there is a fairly large christian minority. We arrived back in early January in good time to pay all the statutory obligations for our employees.



Church of Christ Leaders in Chiang Mai



Christmas Dinner with family in Thailand

As usual we have a very busy programme ahead of us with visiting surgical and medical teams. We started with the paediatricians from East Carolina University who saw over 800 children. We have an eye surgeon visiting in March, who will be busy as there is a long list of patients to be seen, followed by urology and plastic surgery. The regular visiting team led by Peggy Schrieber will arrive around Eastertime, when the International board meeting will be held.

The finishing touches are being put to the nutrition unit and the one-stop GBV centre while the nurses' hostel has reached roof level. There may be another build this year, if normally reliable sources are correct, and the Constituency Development Fund finally approves our application for a new mothers' shelter.

# PARTNER PLAN



**One Stop Centre**

As usual we have had a number of visitors. Our first guests were Andrew Ashdown, the Methodist Africa Coordinator for Partnerships with Rev Richard Andrew and his wife Debbie. Richard is the Methodist President Elect for 2025-26. They were visiting Zambia to attend the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Church of Zambia at Mindolo in January 1965. We enjoyed the warm fellowship and the opportunity to show a bit of the life and work of the church and mission at Mwandi. After celebrating Burns' Night in Lusaka we returned with our friend Jenny Steen, who is a recently retired palliative care nurse. She has been a great help and source for Ida in her preparation for the oncology unit, which along with the lab are next on the list for construction.

There is still no sign of our long-promised x-ray machine or CT scan, so as an interim measure we have applied to the Japanese Embassy to be considered for a digital mobile x-ray machine to replace our dated mobile one which requires constant repair. Ida is also about to purchase a machine to check the thyroid levels before and after theatre. Thyroidectomies have become a renowned speciality here. The machine will be purchased here in Zambia so that it can be serviced and that the various reagents are readily available. New theatre lights are needed too so we will apply to the Czech Embassy to see if they can help us again with this work.

The oxygen plant is currently switched off as it is due its service. We had been promised that the servicing of the plant would be funded through the MOH by Zambia UNICEF using USAID, as a result we had not looked elsewhere for funding. The good news is that MOH and UNICEF are trying to come up with some form of help because of the pending surgeries.

There is still some confusion over what is happening after the presidential directive to freeze USAID for 90 days, CHAZ, the umbrella body for all mission hospitals, was told that the waiver was only for ARVs and lab reagents. CoAg (Cooperative Agreement between Zambia and USA) was put on hold for a week then suddenly CoAg told everyone that under the waiver they could return to normality so the whole CoAg team including the vehicle went back to work. The freeze affected a data clerk, a VMMC Nurse, a clinical officer, 3 Community Based Volunteers and a Mother-Child Health Nurse. Another organisation employing a female data clerk have not told her to resume work. CHAZ have medicines and reagents to last until June, but is still quite a worry about people's medicines, jobs and the families they support.

We have finally made progress, all of a sudden, with acquiring the land for the solar farm. We met recently with the Senior Chief and thereafter with the Kuta Executive and have been allocated 158 hectares. We are meeting on Wednesday with the Indunas to 'beat the bounds'. This means that SinoHydro, the contractors, will be able in a few weeks to start clearing the land and begin assembling the panels. It will bring some much-needed work to the area.

The Kuta and Chief have agreed that land will be made available to us and have provisionally allocated the project a plot. The administrative details will be completed on the return of the Lyashimba from Monguat the beginning of April.

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The Hospital and community are fixing their attention now on all the behind-the-scenes work, organisation and preparation for our sponsored walk. On Saturday, 5th April 2025 the staff of the Mission Hospital will join many other people, friends of Mwandu Mission, here in Zambia and overseas for our 10-kilometre run or walk, an event to raise money to build and equip a physiotherapy gym for our hospital. The objective is to raise funds for a dedicated modern building with all the necessary equipment for our physiotherapy department that treats so many patients at Mwandu annually. The gym will also be used recreationally by staff outside working hours for a small subscription, towards sustainability.

The UCZ Mwandu Jerusalem Choir will shortly launch their album with videos on a stick, called Sutulela Kuna (Draw Near to Me), based on Psalm 70:4-5.

They will also help a widow who worked as a cleaner at the hospital for many years and still looks after 4 grandchildren. She has been unable to complete her concrete block house and the walls of the daub and wattle traditional house she lived in collapsed in the rains. They will help her to complete the ring beam, roof it and put in doors and windows so she has a weathertight dwelling for herself and the children.

Otherwise, we have been blessed by this year's rains. We have received 451mm so far. Last year at the same time we had had only 328mm. There are reports of heavy flooding at Chavuma, on the

Angolan Border, so the spate should reach us in about a week. We can see a difference in the height of the river as the water begins to spread over the islands here. Hopefully the water will reach our garden this year.

We chose the scripture at the beginning of this letter that speaks to the work we are presently doing; constructing and renovating buildings. While this verse from Isaiah seems to be calling us to build, repair and restore buildings in need; it is also a promise to us, of what we can achieve, if we do the Lord's will. As we begin our journey through Lent and prepare for the celebration of Easter, we seek to follow our Lord and take our place with those who bear the heavy burden of administration, management and planning, as well as those who have no choice but to devote all their energy to surviving the pressures of poverty and unemployment.

With our love  
Ida and Keith



Orchid from Thailand