

The Tarlings' Newsletter N° 51 ~ January 2009

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength." Philippians 12-13 (NIV)

Joys renewed

It is good to keep in touch, and the world is a small place these days. So perhaps it is only natural to get the occasional text from Tanzania – Do you know where the spare safe keys are? The ultrasound machine isn't working – any ideas? But we were especially pleased recently to have a weekend visit from the Diocesan Secretary and another staff member, who were over for the Rochester Diocesan conference in Bognor. They were able to update us with first hand news of Mpwapwa, and all that is going on there.

St Luke's goes forward



The postponed visit of Mizengo Pinda, the Prime Minister of Tanzania, to the 12-bed ward happened in November amidst great joy and celebration. He was impressed with what he saw, and encouraged St Luke's to press on with the application to be recognised as a full blown Health Centre.

This would fully utilise all the facilities there, and has the strong support of the new District Medical Officer who has been very helpful. So the application is now with the Ministry of Health in Dar es Salaam.

Meanwhile the usual challenges continue.

One of the senior nursing staff had the authenticity of her qualification certificate thrown into question and has had to leave. With the economic changes in Mpwapwa due to the 'sapphire rush', with the cost of living rising astronomically, the staff have held out for a wage rise to bring them into line with Government salaries. This is probably a deserved increase, but also needs income to rise proportionally to cover costs. It may be that the way forward is to accept some Government seconded staff – to lose a little of St Luke's independence in return for Government help in meeting escalating costs. Much wisdom is needed by those who are now responsible for these management decisions.

Meanwhile there are the needs for expansion to go fully forward – it would be good to have male and female wards, and a new ultrasound machine to replace the rather elderly one from Australia which has done such good service over the years, and seems to have decided to go into retirement. We do hold a small trust fund for St. Luke's but it will not cover all these needs, and we need to try and help the staff there to prioritise, as well as looking for new funds for the wards to be added.

A new start for Peter

Peter Brook from VSO UK joined the team in October, particularly to be involved in the HIV Home Based Care work, as he is a Palliative Care Nurse by profession. He has spent the last few weeks getting a feel for the work in Mpwapwa, and visiting patients in their homes, together with our volunteers. Once he has a good command of Swahili, he



will have much to teach, to upgrade the service we give to our HIV patients to a first class one. I hope he will also get involved in some of the management issues at St Luke's once he has got a feel for the culture and the way things work there.

St Paul's' Church Mpwapwa



We were also pleased to hear news of our Church in Mpwapwa. There has recently been a major shakeup in the PCC, and we will be interested to see how the Church progresses under 'new management'. As yet nobody has taken on the commitment to the 10 O'clock service, which struggles on, on a rather ad hoc basis. It may be that the Bishop will appoint a further member of Clergy to strengthen the leadership there.

A Time to Give Thanks

We have almost completed our visits to Churches who have so faithfully supported us over the years, and it was a time of great joy to be able to renew so many friendships scattered across the country. Chris and Tim faithfully came with us, after their various sports fixtures on Saturday mornings, and also reflected that they had quite enjoyed it – though Chris said he wishes there was a teleporter to avoid spending half of each weekend in the car! We praise God for the generous provision of the gift of a new car, after the ancient one which had done such good service died on one of our visits, and we ended up being given a lift back, car and all, by AA Relay. Unfortunately it proved uneconomical to fix.

Changes and learning

It would be good to report that we are now happily settled back in UK after our first six months here, but really we feel there is a long way to go. Any major change takes a long time to settle into, and this has been rather a major one for us all.

For Godfrey, the current economic climate is not great, with a huge army of unemployed surveyors chasing what jobs come up, and despite a wealth of qualifications his experience in Tanzania being treated as suspect to say the least. He presses on trying to keep positive but it is a demoralising process. Meanwhile he is polishing his washing and ironing skills, and is chief shopper, as well as a full time round of Job Applications for a broad spectrum of posts, but it's not exactly what he had in mind as a long term career.

At least there is a need for doctors, and Rachel has had to start work perhaps earlier than may have been ideal, in order to get a certificate of Foundational Competence classing her fit to be trained as a GP. So she is in Acute Geriatrics in Swindon. The up side is that it is Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 (ish) which fits well with Church visits and family life. The down side is that is an hour's commuting time away. The job lasts till 4th August 2009. Meanwhile the next task is some quite exacting exams in February and March to see if she can gain a place on the 3 year GP training scheme.

We also need to sell our house in Sevenoaks (wherever we end up), but no takers as yet. The year in this borrowed house is flying by, and we will probably have to rent again somewhere for next year unless a miracle happens with a super quick sale.

The children have settled well into their new schools, and are generally enjoying a different lifestyle, with occasional pangs for friends and also all the benefits of living overseas. Esther is still boarding, just 5 minutes down the road, as it is less disruptive than being away on Church visits


every weekend. We are very pleased that she has decided to be confirmed this year, and she is enjoying all the breadth of activities that go on in her school.

So all in all, the whole process is proving to be a somewhat 'refining' one, and we trust our Heavenly Father who has all things in his hand, and will work it all out in his own good timing. We are full of his praises for our time in Tanzania, which we would not have swapped, and trust that we will be able to continue to walk in his ways in UK as the right way becomes plain before us.

So thank you for all your support over the 16 years since this process started. We are grateful that you have journeyed with us in prayer, and shared in the joys and sorrows of life of our brothers and sisters overseas. We are grateful also for the support of Crosslinks in the background for all this time, and all their valuable work. This will be our last Prayer Letter with Crosslinks but we will be keeping our web site up to date. We would also love to hear from you by phone, e mail, letter, or even a visit in person. Once we have had a break from weekends on the road, no doubt we will also be making some visits to see other friends.

Thank you as ever for your prayers love and financial support, which enabled our (and therefore your) partnership in the Gospel in Mpwapwa. So please do keep in touch, and once again thank you for all your love and prayers, and support in so many ways.

With much love from,
Godfrey Rachel
ESTHER
Chris Tim



Pointers for Prayer

Give Praise for: -

- ✓ The life and witness of the Diocese as the first chapter closes, and a new chapter begins.
- ✓ The various building works which were undertaken during our years in Tanzania that will enable local Christians to take the Word of God to their neighbours.
- ✓ Several good key members of staff who can share the workload of management.

Please pray for: -

- ? Esther Christopher and Tim continuing to settle in their new school set ups
- ? Adequate rain in Mpwapwa - We hear that the year's rainfall has started badly. Poor rains affect the food security of many families in the area.
- ? Wisdom for Dr. Lugwisha and the management team at St. Luke's in managing a staff team with varied temperaments, abilities and objectives! Pray for the right decisions to be made.
- ? Peace for each of us in a time of enormous changes in our lives.
- ? A job for Godfrey. Good recollection and a keen mind in the coming exams for Rachel.
- ? All at Crosslinks HQ as they continue to work in the background supporting the work all around the world, taking God's Word to God's World.

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