



Christmas Greetings from Malawi

December 2020

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

Dear Friends,

Greetings from a very hot Malawi! Along with the rest of the world, the coronavirus has been the main news of this year and has affected everyone to some degree or other. I was due to come home for furlough in April just as everything was locking down so made the decision to remain, or at least the decision was made for me as the airlines were not operating. But I am glad to have stayed as thankfully the virus has had minimum effect upon life here. Apart from schools shutting down from the middle of March to October, everything else has carried on as normal with a few precautions put in place, for example, buckets of water and soap outside all shops, banks and public places, the need to wear masks, and the number of passengers on local minibuses halved. Churches and public gatherings were not to exceed 100 people, although initially they were told not to meet. Early on the President declared a state of emergency and called for a full lockdown. But the people took to the streets in protest as such a lockdown would have devastating effects upon the majority of the population who largely depend upon the informal business sector to make a living and put food on the table. There was a court injunction put in place against such a lockdown, probably making Malawi one of the few countries that has not experienced a lockdown. However, local businesses and the hospitality sector have struggled, prices of everyday commodities have increased and the value of the kwacha has decreased. To date, Malawi has registered 6,148 cases including 187 deaths. Since around September, the number of new cases each day has been in single figures and last week the total number of active cases in the country was 30! However, the last couple of days the numbers have started to rise with 97 new cases recorded this week.



Traditionally, the period from April to November is conference season where we travel to each of the ten regions for weekend conferences, gathering people from all our churches within that region. Since the numbers attending exceed 100 we were not permitted to proceed and all conferences this year were cancelled. But from August we resumed going out to local churches to encourage the folk.

This period has meant that we have been able to pour in some resources to undertaking some much needed maintenance on some of the churches, children's homes and schools. This picture shows new bathrooms being made for the home in Chikwawa, using the gifts of the pastor there who is a builder by trade.



Some of the young people in our Children's Homes are in the final year of their secondary education. Having been out of school since March, they were preparing to sit their final exams in October and had already sat one or two exams. Then sadly it became known that the exams had leaked countrywide resulting in them being cancelled and will now take place at the end of January 2021, further disrupting their education.



Currently, thanks to sponsors in the Tamworth Elim Church, we are able to support 26 young people through secondary school. Also, for those who have left school we have put one young person through driving school and are currently helping another apply for a course in mechanical engineering. This is the next step in seeking to help them find a way to support themselves and live independently.

In May, a re-run of the presidential elections took place after the courts annulled Prof. Peter Mutharika's victory in the May 2019 election due to irregularities. Other countries in Africa have had elections annulled, but for the opposition candidate to then go on and win a rerun is unprecedented. But Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, the opposition leader was successful, and is seeking to eradicate corruption and describes himself as a servant leader. He is a minister of the Assemblies of God church and for some time was their General Superintendent. We thank God that these elections went smoothly and there is largely much positivity with this change of government.

At the moment we are busy travelling to each of the children's homes to deliver Christmas gifts. We give thanks to Pastor Ray Cotter and all those who sponsored him on his sponsored walk so that each child can receive new clothes, and a new school bag. Each home has also received a new solar lamp, a bag of maize and rice and will also be able to have a good Christmas meal of chicken, rice and vegetables followed by a fizzy drink.



We have now just entered the rainy season. The build up to the rains saw what was described as a heatwave where temperatures here in Blantyre reached 38 degrees and in the Lower Shire, where I was for the first three years, temperatures got up to 45 degrees! Thankfully, since the rains started, it's not quite that hot now. With the majority of the population being sustenance farmers, it is crucial to have good rains for the crops to grow well and ensure enough food for the next season. Please pray for good rains this season.

I take this opportunity to thank you once again for your interest and support throughout another year. I do not take your support for granted and appreciate each one who gives sacrificially to support me and the work here. Your partnership, whether through prayer, encouragement or financial giving is much appreciated.

Although your Christmas is likely to be very different this year, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and God's blessing throughout the new year.

With love,

Jackie x

All gifts for ministry should be sent to me via Elim Missions. This can be done: 1) online via the Elim Missions website- www.elim.org.uk/missions, 2) by post to Elim International Missions, De Walden Road, West Malvern, WR14 4DF. Cheques should be made payable to Elim International Missions & marked "Jackie Griffiths, Malawi" on the reverse. Or, 3) if you would like to set up a Direct Debit, Standing Order or make a 'one off' bank transfer donation, please contact the Elim Missions office missions@elimhq.net, to request further information. On the rare occasion that money is given to projects which become either over or under subscribed, or is continued to be given for a missionary after they have completed their missionary service, we will make every endeavour to contact donors before we divert funds to works of a similar nature. To cover the cost of administrating missionaries and overseas organisations, Elim Missions withholds a small percentage on gifts given.

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