

Gary Brough - Malawi

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Dear friends,

Greetings from Mzuzu. As always, this letter comes with our continued thanks for your prayerful support of our family during our time here in Malawi.

Things have been busy at the Church and Society Programme with a number of funding applications being filed over recent weeks. We were very pleased to have been successful in securing funding for a new mining governance programme. Malawi has a number of natural resources including coal and other minerals which, if well managed, could be of great financial benefit to the country. The challenge is to ensure that mining activities aren't detrimental to local communities and the environment, and to make sure rural Malawians benefit from the proceeds of their country's resources. This programme will help people who have been displaced or suffered loss to their livelihoods to get the compensation they deserve.

We also recently received permission from the Chief Commissioner of Malawi's Prison Service to begin working in prisons in northern Malawi, following a visit to Zomba to plead our case in person. Malawi's prisons are notoriously overcrowded and under resourced, as a result the conditions for inmates can be horrific and malnutrition is not uncommon. Cells are large crowded rooms, without beds, where prisoners sleep side-by-side and end-to-end. This problem is exacerbated because of large numbers of the prison population being pre-trial detainees. People can spend significant lengths of time in prison awaiting trial, often longer than their potential service if they even are found guilty. Without access to legal support they languish in prison awaiting the slow wheels of justice to turn. With this new consent we can begin working with such prisoners to ensure they have access to justice.



Jacqueline has begun volunteering at the Crisis Nursery in Mzuzu. They care for babies whose mothers have died in childbirth. Families can't afford expensive baby formula so the nursery looks after the babies until they are weaned and ready to return to their families. They do also receive babies who have been abandoned. It's just a few doors down from the house and she can take Morven along with her so it's a good fit for now. She can go in for a few hours two or three times a week and help where needed.



Eilidh finished her first term at school with a great report card and feedback from her teacher. It hasn't always been easy, but she's made a few good friends and a classmate has moved in across the road which has really helped. Morven is walking now and we're glad to be living in a bungalow

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now that she's constantly on the go. We're very thankful that the girls have adapted so well to life here.

We took a break at Easter with a few days by Lake Malawi to rest and refresh. After a busy few weeks we welcomed the opportunity to spend time together as a family. We feel very fortunate to have this beautiful lake just an hour from our door, but it was extra special being there to see the sun rise in the morning and the moon at night.

We're in the middle of election season just now. Presidential, parliamentary and council elections are being held on 21st May. Elections are generally peaceful but, as expected, feelings are running high and things seem close. We pray that Malawi chooses good leadership and that in turn, those who are elected serve for the benefit of all Malawians.

We've started settling into Katawa CCAP church. The church is close to the house and we go to the English service at 7am. A missionary from The Netherlands leads the Sunday School which has helped Eilidh settle into a very different church setting. Services are about 2 hours long and a lot of the components would be familiar to those of a Scottish Presbyterian tradition also. It's quite a large congregation and so neighbourhood 'vestries' meet on Sunday afternoon for another small service or bible study.



We made it along to our local group, St John's, a few weeks ago. We were warmly welcomed and at the end of the meeting they said they would like to welcome us properly and so they would come to our house for the meeting the following Sunday! Thankfully, they brought their own chairs and the weather held out for us as at that week's meeting had a record 55 members. Visitors from Zambia and curiosity about the new family in the neighbourhood probably added to the number.

Once again, thanks for your friendship, prayers and partnership in this work.
Every blessing,
Gary, Jacqueline, Eilidh and Morven

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P.S. A number of you have asked how we're getting on with the garden. Well, we're still learning! We've enjoyed our first harvest of beans and maize, and it has been good to be able to share these with the people who help us with the house and garden. Potatoes and cucumbers were not such a success, but we're now enjoying sweet potatoes and expect pumpkins soon too!

Prayer points

Please give thanks for...

- The first fruits of working here with the new mining governance programme.
- Permission to start working in Malawi's prisons to help provide access to justice.
- A refreshing time away and God's continued care and provision for our family.

Please pray for...

- Upcoming elections, that they would be free, fair and peaceful. Pray also that those who are elected will work hard to see Malawi development for the benefit of all Malawians.
- Katawa CCAP Church, that they would be faithful in the work of the Gospel and that we would find our place there and know how best to get involved.
- The continued challenge of setting priorities for our work when resources are so scarce, and needs are so great.