

Prayers for Mpachika and St. Mark's

April 2010

Malawi Matters

Lord our God, we thank you for the link that we have between our two churches. It has been good to see how you follow the Lord Jesus, both in your worship and your lives. We have learned so much from the way that you show your faith in little every day things. We have enjoyed the enthusiasm of your worship that contrasts to the way in which we meet together. Maybe one day we will be as free and uninhibited as you are!

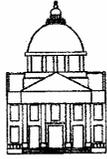
The contact that we have with you is really a two-way conversation and that is something that we really value. We look forward to the visit that your Presbytery is making to Aberdeen in September 2010 and we trust that some of your congregation will be able to visit us. Until that time, we pray that the Lord Jesus will continue to bless you, that you will grow in faith and love for him as well as for those within your church and linked to your community of faith.

The Lord bless you and keep you., The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.



Amen





St. Mark's Malawi Committee

The St. Mark's Malawi Committee is newly formed and its formation was the action of John Watson who retired as our minister in June 2009. The Committee consists of David Yacamini (Chairman), Margaret Donald, Roddy Mowatt, Valerie Kemp, Kath McBain and Rosalyn Rennie.

The aim of the Committee is to raise awareness of the partnership with Mpachika Church, to encourage the St. Mark's congregation to get involved with events relating to Malawi and to help with fundraising for Mpachika and Malawi in general.

Recent Fundraising Events for Malawi

Pot Luck Lunch

On Sunday 13th December 2009, a pot-luck lunch was held by the Malawi committee to raise awareness about the work of the committee and the links between St Mark's and Mpachika. A pot-luck lunch involves everyone taking a small, cold dish to share with one another. After morning worship, the congregation met in the hall and very much enjoyed the wide selection of food which had been brought. Given that we were in the period of Advent, we had a festive theme and displays about Mpachika were put up around the hall. Valerie, one of the members of the committee gave a short presentation to inform the congregation about the committee and its work. Our aim was to ensure that the congregation had a good understanding of the partnership between St Mark's and Mpachika and were aware of the ways in which they could support this. A good time was had by all the diners and it is hoped that this event will be repeated soon.

Malawi Partnership Committee

As well as the St. Mark's Malawi Committee, which is relatively new and comprises of members of St. Mark's only, we have the Malawi Partnership Committee which is made up of various members from the twinned churches. Some of the members have visited Malawi in the groups and some have not but have an interest in Malawi and all church members are welcome. The Committee organises events to raise funds for the Malawians to come across to Aberdeen and for Aberdeen congregational members to visit Blantyre. It also organises the programmes for the visits to Aberdeen and takes part in general and regular communication with Blantyre Presbytery.

The Container Project was started some years ago through the Committee. Previously four containers of goods were sent to Malawi and there have been a final three containers sent off this week.

The Committee organised a concert of local talent to be held in Queens Cross Church and this raised £1,500. and which included our very own Garry Watson, John Watson's son who has an excellent voice.

All churches have been organising coffee mornings, concerts and various events in order to raise money for the container fund and for travel from Blantyre to Aberdeen for various congregational members.

The Committee both as a group and as independent congregations has been keen to encourage more communication between each twinned church. We are aware that postal communication can be unreliable but at St. Mark's we are keen to e-mail Rev. Master Jumbe and our various e-mail contacts so that as many people in Mpachika will be aware of what is happening at St. Mark's and will know that we are thinking about Mpachika and wishing the people well.



St. Mark's Players

One of the most active groups in St. Mark's is our Drama Group, known as the St. Mark's Players. This started twenty years ago when John Watson first came to St. Mark's and wanted a group that could cover the whole age range of the congregation. In the

beginning we had children of school age or younger right up to people in retirement and over the years that has meant that some of the original members' grandchildren are now involved in the variety of productions we put on.

We also have a group (all members of "The Players") just for the youngsters, known as "Stage Door" who put on their own shows with help from the adults.

We perform Plays, Cabarets (when we serve a meal at the interval) and our ever popular Christmas Pantomime. This is unique to Britain and its former colonies and it is popular in South Africa where a story based on an old fairy tale is told in music, song and dance and where the "Principal Boy" (the hero) is always played by a young girl and the comic mother figure (The Dame) is played by a man! The baddie can be a male or female part and a beautiful princess is always played by a young female. Last year's panto "Police in Boots" was performed in late November and photographs are now on our website.

The Container Project

At time of writing this, we have just seen off the fifth and last container to Malawi-three in one week! It is packed with, hopefully, lots of useful items for recipients. A lot of people in Aberdeen have put a lot of personal time, energy and fundraising efforts into this project and we thank them for their efforts.

Malawi Concert

On 19 February 2010 we held a very successful and entertaining concert in St. Mark's hall when we had local singers "Craig Pike and Friends" along to provide us with an entertaining repertoire of songs. The concert was generously attended by a large number of the St. Mark's congregation as well as members and friends from other Aberdeen churches. The sum of 902.75 was raised to go towards the container fund.

Coffee Morning

On 27 February 2010 a Coffee Morning ran at St. Mark's. We had the usual faithful band of volunteer helpers making and selling a selection of home baking, books and we had a HUGE amount of second hand children's games for sale! The sum of £511.35 was raised which was great.



St. Mark's Hillwalking Group

Our small walking group was started in about 1990 and we have walked a lot of hills in the North East of Scotland. We also undertake some shorter rambles too

Within easy reach of Aberdeen there are a lot of good walking opportunities and during the wet, wintry weather we often walk in the local forests that have tracks and paths through them yet still offer a little protection.

A recent walk was on a closed railway line that has been converted into a walk way. It is nice and smooth and flat but it still gives good views over the surrounding countryside and we were lucky that the weather stayed dry. We have walked on a very snowy Lochnagar which is not far from Balmoral where the Royal family spend some of their summer holidays.

Ben Nevis is the highest mountain in Britain and St Mark's group climbed it in August 2004. We have also walked round Dunnottar Castle at Stonehaven which is just south of Aberdeen and makes an excellent circular walk along the cliff top path.

St. Mark's Guild

The Guild Project Partnership Scheme established in 1997, encourages members to support projects from a range chosen by its Projects and Topics Committee. The success of this scheme has been proven not only by the raising of three million pounds in 12 years but also in encouraging members to expand their knowledge of different issues of concern in the world. This set of six projects, chosen under the strategy of "What does the Lord require of you?" running from 2009-2012, will surely inspire and encourage members to support them with "worship, prayer and action" Each guild in Scotland is required to choose three projects to support. The St. Mark's Guild is supporting three projects. They are as follows:

CrossReach/Social Care Council "On the Other Side" (Scotland)

There are 14 prisons in Scotland and Visitors' Centre resources are only provided in three of them. CrossReach runs the visitors' centre at Perth Prison. Many people visiting prisons feel socially isolated even though they themselves have done nothing wrong. We support families on the other side by offering somewhere "outside" of the prison where they can rest and be refreshed after often a long journey, access advice, information and practical support when a loved one is "inside".

Children visiting can find the prison environment challenging and CrossReach offer a range of support services specifically for them. This centre is part of an innovative service to families who are often victims of circumstances beyond their control. CrossReach aims, with your help to provide similar support services across Scotland's prison services.

HIV/AIDS Project "A New Hunger" (various countries)

The Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS projects committed to helping people who live with this life-threatening virus in Scotland or overseas. With the active involvement of The Guild, we hope to extend our work in a world currently encountering a major crisis in the provision of food. With global demand for basic foodstuffs growing each year, prices are rising dramatically, forcing many of the world's poorest people to go without meals. For families struggling with HIV, this represents a real threat to health and even to life, as a reliable source of good food is essential for life-saving antiretroviral drugs to work.

The project aims to fund church-based initiatives which will help those infected and affected by HIV to become more self-sufficient, through income-generation schemes leading to greater food security, providing new hope for some of the world's most vulnerable and overlooked people.

Mission Aviation Fellowship "Mission Run" (Madagascar)

Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island but also one of the poorest. Lack of infrastructure makes travel difficult for organisations trying to help people physically and spiritually. With few roads and mountainous, jungle-covered terrain, flying is the only quick and safe way to travel.

MAF are committed to working in partnership and support from the Guild for this project which will enable more work to be undertaken in isolated parts of Madagascar. Regular monthly shuttles, with our aircraft being based remotely, will allow them to undertake shorter local flights and allow our partners to carry out their work more efficiently and cost-effectively. Normally unable to benefit from MAF's services, the Church in Madagascar will now be able to join flights and reach more people with the Gospel.