



SUPPORTING ST LUKE'S HOSPITAL IN MALAWI

St Luke's Hospital in Malosa, Malawi is a project we chose as a congregation to support both financially and with prayer.

Catherine Evans visited the Hospital early in 2011 and wrote about her visit soon afterwards in *Outlook*. At that time, the Doctor at the Hospital, Susannah Woodd, was about to leave and no replacement had been found.

It has taken many months to find a replacement but Catherine has just received news to say that Dr Eve Stockler from Holland is due to arrive at the end of January. The prayers of many people have been answered and we look forward to hearing from Dr Stockler when she has settled in.

In the meantime Catherine has been in e-mail contact with Steve Macheso. She mentioned to him that she had heard that the kwacha (local currency) had been devalued by 10% and that fuel costs had risen sharply. She also asked:

Are there other matters we can pray for? How are the supplies of medicines being affected by fuel shortages for instance? Distribution has always been a difficulty, how much worse has it become? And are you affected by food shortages too? Please let us know what you would like us to pray for on behalf

of the work of the hospital. It helps us to keep St Luke's in the hearts and minds of the congregation when we have specific matters to pray for.

And Steve replied:

We at St Luke's are extremely grateful for your noble intentions and for putting us in your prayers.

This is indeed a tough time for us in running the hospital given the challenges we are continuously facing. Top of the list of our challenges is the chronic drug shortages which have been compounded with increased prices of purchase as a result of the current fuel shortage and the devaluation of the local currency, as you rightly indicated in your e-mail. Over the past months we have even reached such extremes as running out of basic items such gloves, cotton wool, canulas, syringes and IV fluids. The other aspect of this problem is of course on distribution. With fuel scarcity we can't get fuel in time for our normal distribution schedules and the fuel we get on the black market is of poor quality and is at very high prices (ranging between 160 to 300% the pump price).

On top of the urgent need for a maternity wing at Nkasala, we have another big concern at one of our other health centres - Chilipa. The general ward there has developed serious cracks and is on the verge of collapse. This is another rural facility and we serve a catchment population of nearly 30,000 people who rely on this facility there.

Despite having five health centres under us, we only have one ambulance which is hardly enough. We are grateful to government which signed a Service Agreement with us so that we provide free Maternity Services in all of our facilities. This has increased the number of women attending our maternity services hence, consequently, the one ambulance we have at the moment can hardly handle the increased number of referrals.

We trust that your prayers and efforts will go a long way in helping us cope with these and many other challenges we are facing.

Should we succeed in securing fuel tomorrow, we will travel with the Principal Hospital Administrator, Mr JB Matola as well as our Maintenance Supervisor to Nkasala and Chilipa Health Centres.

We are pleased to say that following Catherine's proposal, Churches Together in Abbots Langley, at its recent Annual Meeting chose to support the work of St Luke's Hospital in its fundraising through 2012 - so please support the work of the Hospital, they are in dire

need, by supporting CTAL fundraising activities and by your prayers. And if you have any ideas for fundraising please get in touch.

STOP PRESS - as we go to press, Catherine has received the latest information of Dr Stockler's arrival:

Dr Stockler arrived in Malawi 19th January. She will undergo 12 weeks' orientation at Zomba Central Hospital (the main hospital in the area) before taking up her post as Senior Medical Officer at St Luke's Hospital. (Zomba is the nearest town to Malosa about half an hour's drive away and used to be the capital of Malawi). Please pray for her as she settles in Malawi and prepares to take up her post.

And Catherine adds: It means she'll start work at the hospital around Easter time....patience for all concerned as she acclimatizes to tropical conditions and huge contrasts with what she will have been used to in Europe.

Some useful websites you might want to visit to find out more:

The USPG Anglicans in World Mission website (uspg.org.uk), especially the October e-newsletter. There is a short video about Healthcare in Malawi which features St Luke's Hospital. Another useful website is www.MALAWIMACS.ORG (Malawi Association for Christian Support). St Luke's Hospital features on it too.



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