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Items for *>imprint<* no. 94: **Tue. 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021**, please, by email at [editor@ccstalbans.org.uk](mailto:editor@ccstalbans.org.uk).

*Peter Young (Ed.)*

## Annual Meetings 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### Meeting of Parishioners

At this meeting, attended by 45 parishioners in person or via Zoom, both existing church wardens were re-appointed, i.e. **Meriel Dixon** and **Jonathan Carter**, as there were no other nominations and hence no requirement for an election.

### Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

This meeting was attended by 49 church members, of whom 19 were joining via Zoom and the remainder in person. 9 other members had given apologies for absence.

**Electoral Roll:** This now stands at 123 church members, 5 having been removed from the roll since September 2020 (the last APCM), due to death (2) or other reasons (3).

### Appointments:

**Deanery Synod:** There were 2 vacancies. There had been one nomination: **Jane Sellars**, who was accordingly appointed.

Deanery Synod representation for Christ Church during 2021-22 therefore comprises Meriel Dixon and Jane Sellars,

**PCC:** There were 3 vacancies; Kate Kent and John Sear had reached the end of their 3-year term and were standing down and Michael Thompson had also stood down during 2021. Paul Collis (Treasurer) had been a co-opted member of PCC during this period.

There were 2 nominations: **Sue Medlycott**, who was willing to stand for a second 3-year term; and **Oliver Donald** who was willing to re-stand following a period away from PCC. These two were therefore appointed.

The PCC membership for 2021-22 therefore comprises, in addition to the vicar, wardens and deanery synod members who are ex-officio members: Malcolm Blaxland, Becki Chafe, Oliver Donald, Jackie Kenealy, Sue Medlycott, Sarah Patrick and Maria Prowse.

## Reports:

The reports from the Church Wardens, Deanery Synod representatives and Trustees (i.e. PCC) incorporated with 2020 Financial accounts, were accepted at the meeting.

**2020 Finances:** Paul reported that the financial report had been distributed to the APCM as unaudited accounts, although they had already been submitted for independent examination and had since been signed off a week prior to the APCM. Regular income in 2020 was roughly the same as for the previous year, but income overall was down, largely due to the effects of Covid on rental income. Hence PCC had had to approve a deficit budget. Otherwise there was nothing of significance to note. In answer to a question about the use of reserves, he reported that, of approximately £200,000 free reserves, some £6,000 of reserves had been used in 2020 and the PCC had again had to approve a deficit budget for 2021 which would mean a further £18,000 of reserves would have to be used. Although not an immediate problem, continued dipping into reserves is not a long-term ideal. After APCM acceptance of the finances, Paul proposed that the current independent examiners, Griffin Stone Moscrop & Co., who have supplied this service for 9+ years for reasonable fees, should continue to do so for the 2021 accounts.

## Forum:

In such a brief summary of these discussions, it has been necessary to consolidate or select points raised in this section. There were a number of issues raised which the PCC will consider at their future meetings.

**Church Services – future plans:** In his sermon in the church service immediately prior to the Annual Meetings, Jeremy had outlined proposed changes to the worship format to commence after 21<sup>st</sup> June, when, subject to the government ‘road-map’ for complete lifting of Covid lock-down restrictions still being on track, more normal worship at Christ Church could resume.

This envisages a single morning service at 10 am, replacing both 9.00 am and 10.40 am services, i.e. a continuation of the current service timing. It would be a live service with personal attendance by the whole church, including families, at the start, including holy communion. This would be followed by options for families and young people (Families Church, Pathfinders, etc.) and also a sermon, or other activities (e.g. discussions, prayer, bible study) for the rest of the congregation. Then there would be the opportunity for us all to come back together again for refreshments and further personal interaction. Live streaming would continue for members still unable to attend in person for whatever reason. [Further details, from the audio version of this sermon, may be found [here](#).]

As expected, this resulted in a number of comments and questions in the Forum. There seemed to be consensus that people were looking forward to being able to meet together again and have greater contact with each other across the generations on Sunday mornings, although some reservations were also expressed about either the service timing and/or options proposed for the second part of the time of worship. The fact that many people will have changed and have different concerns about coming out of lock-down, and that we will not all be in the same place, must also be recognised. There were also questions/comments regarding other things we could get involved with as a church family and also what we might be able to do to open up to the local community once again.

**Love our Grounds (LOG):** Meriel advertised the first proposed post-Covid get-together to tidy up the church grounds: This is on [Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> July starting at 9.30am](#). Please put this in your diary and come if you possibly can. She also asked for volunteers to mow the church lawns on a regular basis, ideally 3 pairs of individuals to do it fortnightly or 3-weekly on a rota basis.

**Climate Change and Creation Care:** As this is such a topical, important and urgent issue, it was suggested it is something in which our church must get more involved and have a stance on. Discussions and more thinking and prayer on this within the fellowship were encouraged. A community garden on our grounds was also mooted.

**Forum for ongoing discussions:** Apart from the APCM, perhaps there should be more opportunities for discussing topics within the church and a recognised forum for this.

**Mission Action Plan (MAP):** Our last MAP dates from 2017 and is overdue for revision. This is underway and hopefully it can be simplified and can certainly be shared within the fellowship.

**Church Roof:** It was acknowledged that the leaks (the severity of which was exemplified in the formation of toadstools on the carpet at the back of the church, during lock-down) needed addressing urgently, but as none of the 'fixes' during the past 30 years have been successful long-term, the PCC had agreed that all the plans and actions over this period should be reviewed by Standing Committee and new proposals generated. However it is bound to be expensive, due to the complex roof structure.

The date of next year's Annual Meetings was agreed: **3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022**

## **EMPOWERMENT – GOD'S STYLE** – *Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi*

The most exciting changes ever witnessed in a group of human beings happened two thousand years ago on a day called Pentecost. Pentecost means literally "50." It was an annual Jewish festival that took place fifty days after another Jewish festival called Passover. At the Passover festival Jesus had been arrested and executed. Three days later He arose. During the following weeks he appeared to some 500 believers within what is now Israel.

On the day of Pentecost about 120 followers of Jesus gathered in an upper room as was their custom. They were excited and expectant because they had seen the risen Christ. But they were also confused, troubled, and timid. They were meeting behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. Then came Pentecost! It was an electrifying, life transforming experience for them. They would talk about it for the rest of their lives. **At Pentecost a ragged aggregation of misfits, wimps in the eyes of the world became formidable ambassadors for Christ!**

The disciples saw what appeared like divided tongues of fire flickering above each of them. Three years earlier, John the Baptist had predicted, "One mightier than I is coming. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Fire has a way of burning away the chaff, anything that is useless or cumbersome. Fire also refines and galvanizes. The hearts of the disciples were set on fire with love for Christ, and with a burning desire to tell the story.

It is embarrassing sometimes how little the modern day church resembles the church of that first Pentecost, considering thousands being added to the church after Peter's sermon. There was excitement everywhere. On the contrary, we are more like a small town I read about. A traveller stopped at a gas station in the town to buy gasoline. He asked if there was a place close by to get something to eat. The attendant answered, "No, there's just the cafe down the road and it closes at 6 o'clock." "What do you folks do around here for excitement?" the motorist asked. "Well," the attendant said, "round here, folks don't get excited." Such could be said of many churches. They are an indication that we have forgotten what the church is really about.

If we go back to the Day of Pentecost, the day the church was born, we will see that God gave us the Church to satisfy one of the great hungers of our time "EMPOWERMENT.

You have heard that word several times? It is a current buzz word in our society. We want to feel that we have control over our lives and take charge of our destinies. We want to know we can follow the dreams of our hearts. But many of us feel powerless. Some of us are held back by our lack of initiative. Others are held back by a deprived environment and visionless leadership. Others by barriers in our society. Still, we hunger to believe we can pull ourselves out of the muck and the mire of a disappointing and dismal situation. And the church is the place where true empowerment takes place, because the transforming power of Jesus is made available to all who seek Him by His Spirit.

Can we not see how God brought about empowerment on that Pentecost day? A handful of farmers, fishermen, tax-collectors and housewives became so empowered that they turned the Roman empire upside down. That's quite an accomplishment. It may very well be the greatest single act of empowerment in recorded history. How did they do it?

**Firstly, they opened themselves to the Spirit of the living God. That is always the first step in any momentous victory. It is to place ourselves in God's hands in utter dependence on his power, love and grace.**

Secondly, they were empowered by their association with one another. They ate together, prayed together, sang together, listened and shared God's word together. This is where home groups/bible studies and fellowship at regular prayer times play a significant role. Scripture was central to their growth. They built each other up in the faith. That's the way the Christian community was designed to regenerate itself.

Chuck Swindoll says that in the Marines he was taught you should dig a hole big enough for two when preparing for combat. There's nothing quite like fighting a battle all alone. There's something strengthening about having a buddy with you that keeps you from panic.

Finally, the Church on the day of Pentecost was empowered by their willingness to serve others. If they had kept the Good News to themselves, their excitement would have withered quickly. May I say to you that the church of Jesus Christ will never be what God intends it to be until we have that kind of passion for reaching out to the world outside our walls, through opportunities God will provide along our way.

The disciples could never recall that "day of Pentecost" without contrasting what they were before it came, and what they were after it had passed. There was a contrast in their measure of spiritual vision, and a contrast in the energy and joy of their work. And so they learned, in a most effective way, that their sufficiency was of God. Because the disciples learnt this lesson of Pentecost so well, it can be rightly said concerning them, "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following." As believers, "There is nothing in us that allows us to claim that we are capable of doing this work. The capacity we have comes from God." (2 Corinth 3:5).

We too need the Enabler, Guide, Comforter, and Teacher, the Holy Spirit. There are battles to fight with many enemies of our Lord from within and without. We cannot go it alone. We are only strong in God either to fight or to bear. And we must learn to say

after the great apostle, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." What we need is spiritual power, Spirit-power, the Pentecostal power. May the LORD help us grasp this inspiring truth. Amen.

## **Our current Sermon Series**

Dates and titles of our sermon series on **Malachi** are unchanged from the programme published in *>imprint<* no.92 (April 2021), page 4. The first sermon, an introduction to the book, was given by Jeremy on 11<sup>th</sup> April, Dele preached on the first 5 verses of Chapter 1 on 25<sup>th</sup> April, and if you are reading this on or after 2<sup>nd</sup> May, Iyabo will have preached on Malachi 1:6-14. Further sermons in the series will be preached weekly until 20<sup>th</sup> June, and there will be a follow-up talkback opportunity at a later date.

If you no longer have access to your copy of *>imprint<* no.92 and need a reminder of the programme, please click [here](#) for a link to issue no.92 from the Christ Church website.

All sermons can be heard again, or for the first time if you miss any, either from the YouTube channel recordings at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyw1PLEnH1df2GzW3pZujyw>, or from the audio-only recordings on the Christ Church website: <https://www.ccstalbens.org.uk/sermons>

## **Mission Partner Updates (*The Brownes, Sarah Y and Zambia*)**

### ***The Brownes in Argentina (Bible Translation, CMS Mission Associate)- April 2021***

#### **Covid-19 update:**

Cases continue to rise across Argentina, with record daily cases in the last few days (over 19000 yesterday), and new restrictions are being brought in as the second wave hits (no lock down yet though).

Last week Michael had the first dose of the Sinopharm vaccine, one of 3 that are being used here (also Sputnik V and Astra-Zeneca).

The main crisis here is the economic situation, with so many jobs already lost. Everyone agrees that another lock-down is not an option, but how are we going to stop the spreading?

President Alberto Fernandez was vaccinated, but he has caught the virus anyway - with no symptoms.

#### **Family news:**

We have not been ill with covid-19, and give thanks to God for his protection and provision during this time. Silvia's pains in her feet and hands have gone now, and she uses eye drops for the glaucoma in her right eye. Kevin and Chris continue their studies online: Chris changed to a new school, where he can do nearly all online, and has the option to finish 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year by December! They also keep busy with their music: Chris with violin and Kevin with drums.



## Translation progress:

Estela and Hilario have now finished 1 Kings and Judges respectively, and have moved on to Psalms and Isaiah. Michael continues with the exegetical and spell checking processes. Travel in and out of Formosa province, where the translators live, is still not permitted, so we still can't meet up, but we did manage to do a group review of Nahum – using WhatsApp messages! Next we'll move on to Micah.

## Points for prayer:

Praise God for the progress that continues to be made on the translation of God's word into Toba, despite the incredible difficulties faced by the translators! These include extremely hot, dry and dusty climate, precarious living conditions, hyper-inflation and ongoing travel restrictions, severely limiting our times of fellowship.

Give thanks we and the Toba translators have been kept safe from covid; please pray this will continue. Pray for more vaccines to be made available in Argentina, and for society as a whole to be responsible and keep to the sanitary measures – facemasks in public, social distancing and regular use of hand sanitizers and soap and water.

Pray for safety at all times for all of us, and for the Lord's protection in the spiritual battle we face as we seek to translate the Word of God.

Pray for ongoing progress of the translation work, especially for José and Ana to find a way to continue their first draft translations. Give thanks for work still being done on Numbers,

Psalms, Isaiah and Ezekiel (the last remaining books to be completed).

Pray for the Lord's ongoing provision for all of us, and give thanks that we can always depend on Him, even in the midst of the coronavirus crisis.

Please pray too for our health, especially for Silvia's eyesight and Michael's diabetes.

**Many thanks for all your support in prayer! God bless you! With love in Jesus!**

*Michael, Silvia, Kevin and Christopher Browne*

## ***Sarah Young (Fundraising and Communications, A Rocha International) – April 2021 (extracts)***

2021 began with a lot of activity for ARI's communications and fundraising. Since I last wrote, we have launched a new look for our enews and printed newsletter. Both are now called *Field Notes* and I enjoyed being able to contribute a number of illustrations for the newsletter. You can read it online at [aroc.me/field-notes-64](http://aroc.me/field-notes-64)

We have also launched the Field Notes Podcast (which you can subscribe to on most podcast players or listen to at [arocha.org/field-notes-podcast](http://arocha.org/field-notes-podcast)). Hosted by Peter Harris and Bryony Loveless, it explores the themes of conservation and hope through interviews with a variety of guests, including an explorer, a financial journalist, a theologian, an environmental historian and a linguistic philosopher.

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Throughout February, we also ran a supporter survey to help us get a better idea of our audience and their communications needs. We were encouraged that over 40% of our supporters have been involved with A Rocha for over 10 years. What a faithful bunch!

From the fundraising side of things, I've been busy with funding reports and grant applications, running our Easter appeal focused on saving species at risk, as well as working on a new donations page for our website, which will hopefully make life easier both for donors and my admin in the future.

At home I've been doing a few more DIY (and pay-someone-else-to-do-it) improvements, but have been particularly enjoying filling up my new greenhouse with seedlings and getting the garden ready for the summer. I have two roses growing, one in memory of my Mum and one for Miranda Harris, as well as some ferns planted in memory of Chris and Susanna Naylor, who had a much-loved tree fern. I'm looking forward to a new season of growth, hopefully in more ways than one.

With thanks, as always, and every blessing, Sarah x

### **Points for prayer and praise**

- „ We are thankful for all we have been enabled to do in fundraising and communications over the first part of 2021, although the task has at times felt a little overwhelming. Please pray for energy and wisdom about how to prioritise our time and capacity as a team.
- „ As we have been recruiting new staff and volunteers into the team and hopefully outsourcing/ automating a few of my administrative tasks, I have been exploring my professional development with our new Executive Director, Simon Stuart. Please pray for wisdom for this process, particularly around the right opportunities to take forward.
- „ Please also pray for the upcoming A Rocha Virtual Forum Festival taking place from 5-11 June: that through lectures, discussions, prayer times and films, we would find 'connection', the theme of the week. And that all the technology and logistics would work!

### **A Rocha International's Field Notes and Podcasts**

Do check out the new format for A Rocha International's combined e-news/newsletter: **Field Notes**. The full web address for the latest issue, no.64, is <https://www.arocha.org/en/publications/field-notes-issue-64/>

If you are unable to download or read the *Field Notes* online or prefer to receive them as hard copy, Felicity Hall has some available which she is happy to supply.

Also as Sarah has mentioned in her second paragraph above, Field Notes Podcasts are also now available on the A Rocha International website. So if you are into podcasts, as it seems many appear to have become addicted to them during lock-down, you can find out more about A Rocha's involvement and thinking over many years – a new podcast every fortnight hosted by Peter Harris and Bryony Loveless. Available here: <https://www.arocha.org/en/field-notes-podcast/> or wherever you get your podcasts.



# Zambia News

April 2021



**Welcome to Zambia News, with news from our in-country partners. Although we are not able to send teams again this year, we are moving ahead with our building projects. You can read about our plans here.**  
*Geoff Spiller*

## Two New Classrooms for Kumbaya School



At the moment, there is no Grade 12 class at Kumbaya School, so pupils must secure a place at another school and find the necessary fees to complete their secondary education. Also, with 540 pupils and just 7 classrooms, space has to be time-shared. Last year, we started to build 2 classrooms and Edward and his team completed the foundations and slab before work was halted. We want to raise the funds to complete these classrooms.

We have set up a Just Giving page to help raise the £19,000 needed for the planned work at Kumbaya and Kiine Schools - can you help? Perhaps you could start your own fundraising activity and link to our page. <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/zambia2021>

**Making plans for 2022?** We are already taking bookings for next year's teams. Why not talk to your friends or church about coming to Zambia?

## Prayer Requests & Answers:

### Give thanks:

- For the support our Partners have been able to give their communities during these difficult times;
- For generous donations, which have enabled Mission Direct to continue supporting our Partners;

### Please pray for:

- Our Partners, for protection from illness and for strength and wisdom to continue their challenging work;
- Our building plans, that we would be able to raise the funds to provide much-needed facilities for our Partners.

## Covid-19 update

Like many African countries, Zambia has had relatively few cases of coronavirus, with about 90,000 cases; about 1,200 people have died. Zambia though is on the UK's 'red list' of countries requiring quarantine in a government-approved hotel, due to the so-called South African variant.

## Building a Toilet Block for Kiine School



As reported in the last Newsletter, Kiine School at Chamba Valley has seen a considerable growth in the past few years, thanks to the persistence of head-teacher Gloria. Pupil numbers now exceed 400 and the toilet block Mission Direct built in 2014 (above right) is no longer sufficient. We plan to extend the toilet block and include facilities for teachers.

We are hoping to arrange some Zoom sessions with our partners over the coming months. If you are interested in attending, please contact [gspiller@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gspiller@hotmail.co.uk)

## A Science Lab for Crown of Life School



A church in St Albans has provided amazing support to Dorothy and Crown of Life School, and over the past 10 years have raised most of the funds to build the current school! They have recently been fundraising to build a science lab. With over 500 pupils at the school up to Grade 12, being able to teach practical science lessons is a vital part of the pupils' education!