



MALAWI STATS & FACTS

Malawi is landlocked and bordered by Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique. It covers an area of 118,480 km² (46,000 miles²), which is about half the Landmass of the UK. About a third of the country is covered by Lake Malawi, which is the the third-largest lake in Africa (364 miles long by 50 miles wide) and widely regarded as the most biodiverse in the world, harbouring more fish species than any other lake on the planet. Protected reserves like Liwonde National Park and Majete Wildlife Reserve boast thriving populations of elephants, lions, leopards, buffalo and rhino.

The population is now over 22 million and growing at over 3% per year but remains mostly concentrated in more rural areas, with agriculture accounting for one third of GDP and employing over 80% of the rural population. Maize (corn) is the staple diet and tea plantations dominate the Thyolo area (pronounced 'cho-lo') in the south, where our Partnership is based.

English is one of the official languages but Chichewa is the main language native to, and widely spoken in the south. The country was formerly known as Nyasaland but gained full independence in 1964. It further transitioned from being a one-party state to a multi-party democracy in 1994, leading to monumental shifts like free primary education. The Malawian economy is one of the least developed in the world and is currently being hampered by reductions in external aid, international debt repayments, the impact of deforestation and the rapidly accelerating crisis of climate change. Despite this, life expectancy has improved in recent years and now averages around 60 years for men and 65 for women.

According to a World Bank report in 2024, over 70% of the population live below the poverty line with the average annual income being just US\$480 (IMF Report, 2024).

The capital is Lilongwe but the largest city is Blantyre (named after David Livingstone's Lanarkshire birthplace). Currency is the Malawi Kwacha with the major religion being Christianity (80% of the people). The climate is sub-tropical with the rainy season dominating from December to May and the dry season from May to December.



Monthly Giving

The number of people making regular monthly contributions to the Partnership has now increased to nine, donating a total of £375 per month. This is terrific news, being as close as we have to a guaranteed income but also helps with future planning being something we can budget a bit around. We're hugely grateful to everyone who's responded that way and we're obviously very keen to grow these numbers. If you would like to donate this way please get in touch with the contacts at the foot of the second page and we'll be happy to pass on details. Any donation is always welcome and no amount is ever too low. We are happy to guarantee that every penny donated will reach frontline projects in Malawi.

As with so much of sub-Saharan Africa HIV/AIDS has had a huge impact with almost one million Malawians being HIV+ with 440,000 under-18s having been orphaned as a direct result of AIDS.

Despite all these economic struggles and related difficulties, Malawians tend to be very optimistic people (as well as hard working) and place huge value upon access to education as a route out of poverty. It's not by chance that the country is known as 'The Warm Heart of Africa' and the people are largely renowned for their exceptional warmth, kindness, and strong sense of family and community. Malawians are amongst the friendliest people you will ever meet. Our Partnership (established in 2008) is with Thyolo Highlands Presbytery of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) and has been formally renewed several times since. Despite the most basic of buildings and resources, the Church in Malawi is vibrant and growing.

“WHEN YOU WALK THROUGH THE WATERS I WILL BE WITH YOU.”

(ISAIAH 43:2)

We've reported before about Isaac Vitto, ministry student from Thyolo Presbytery who has been generously sponsored through his studies by two people in Stromness. Following his Ordination last year, Isaac has now reached another milestone with his academic graduation in March this year. Isaac would like to continue studying sometime to complete a Masters in theology but is meantime serving as Parish Minister in Mpilipili, which is in the Mangochi District where he has responsibility for four congregations and ten prayer houses spread across a vast and geographically challenging area.

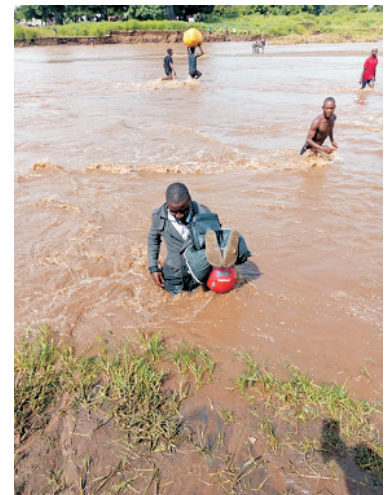
Isaac writes, *“While the work is deeply fulfilling, it is not without its difficulties. Reaching many of the congregants particularly the sick, elderly, and those in remote areas remains a significant challenge. The terrain is difficult, and the road network is poor, especially during the rainy season when many routes*

become nearly impassable. The most practical means of transport in this context is a motorcycle.

However, even this presents challenges, as the area is characterised by numerous rivers, many of which lack bridges. In such instances, the only way to proceed is to physically cross waist deep waters, often with the assistance of local community members who help carry the motorcycle across the rivers.”

In Orkney, we're all too well aware of the logistical problems caused by poor weather and by stretches of water but mercifully we don't have to wade through any of them. We wish Isaac and the family every continued blessing with his fruitful ministry.

Isaac and the family with feet planted on more solid ground.



WEATHER WOES

Another problem we've regularly reported on has been that of storm damage to Malawian buildings. The latest casualty to add to the list is the Nansonia Prayer House in Matapwata Parish. Following the rainstorm the local people constructed a new Church, which is already being used for worship, but which remains with a very incomplete roof. The roof needs funds for completion before they can address the issue of door and window frames, glazing, flooring and plastering.



RECENT FUND TRANSFERS

since the last newsletter

27/5/26

£4,684.50 comprising:
£3,113.50 in Gift Aid (tax reclamation)
and £1,571 in private donations.

ANTHU PAMODZI

The committee are currently working with the *Scotland Malawi Partnership* to try and bring the above photographic exhibition to Orkney. Anthu Pamodzi is Chichewan for “people together” and tells the story of the 20 years of partnership between the two nations, through a series of powerful images. It has already toured throughout much of Scotland and we will reveal full details if and when this comes to fruition.

The Orkney-Malawi Partnership Committee currently comprises Sally Bartkowiak, Caroline Butterfield, Alison Dickie, June Freeth, Iain MacDonald, Catriona Matheson, Liz McVicar, Elma Moar and James Watson. For details about the Partnership Committee's work or how to donate to any project please speak to any of the above or contact Iain on imacdonald@churchofscotland.org.uk / 01857-677357.