

MZUZU NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2026

MZUZU AIDS ORPHAN CARE PROGRAM – CANADA-MALAWI

SMILES OF JOY AND HOPE



Mzuzu Sunday 19th October 2025

Canon Peter Walker was the guest speaker at the Mzuzu Sunday Service held at St. Peter's on 19th October 2025. Below is an excerpt from his talk - you will find it very interesting indeed!

It is a delight for Ginny and me to return to St Peter's. So many fond memories.

I wish to thank Fr Matt for his invitation to speak on this 'Mzuzu Sunday' – even though he is elsewhere. But I am happy to see Monique again; (I'm sure she is a great addition to this parish)...and deacon Will Simon, who I knew as a teenager, performing his diaconal ministry.

Mzuzu? I'd never heard of the place. Nor, years ago, could I have found Malawi on the map: a poor landlocked country of 22 million in south-eastern Africa. Yet how the 'Mzuzu outreach' has become a vital part of the identity of this historic parish! After twenty years, a relationship to celebrate!

Who is responsible for this? God the Holy Spirit, I would say.

The Spirit prompts, nudges, suggests, yet needs human actors to accomplish God's healing work - hearts "open" to the Spirit. As St Augustine famously said: "Without God, we cannot; without us, God will not".

Who is responsible? Secondly, without doubt, Colin Turnpenney – that good-natured ‘Indiana Jones-Irishman’ was the catalyst, the spark that ignited local interest. And still, Colin leads by example.

The AIDS epidemic had swept through much of sub-Saharan Africa – we knew that from the news reports – but the reality seemed remote, distant, like the ongoing suffering in Sudan or Gaza today. Colin, through his African travels, had witnessed the grim reality up close, and tried to respond practically; and in time he quietly persuaded us to join him in a very specific work: the care and feeding of AIDS orphans in rural Malawi, through the auspices of St Mark’s Anglican church, Mzuzu.

The Holy Spirit works through others as well: people like us, and people like the late Fr James Chifisi of St Mark’s church– a remarkable and heroic man: a priest as well as a doctor! Without his medical training, without his pastoral leadership, without his sheer faith and determined vision, no AIDS orphans feeding program or care for adult sufferers would have happened.

When I think of the ‘communion of saints’ - that great ‘cloud of witnesses’ who continue to inspire us - I number Fr. James Chifisi in the top rank. Like Mother Theresa of Calcutta, he was one of the saints – though unheralded, hidden.

Yet without Fr Chifisi and Colin’s patient persuasion of the saints at St Peter’s, the Mzuzu connection would never have materialized. And we’d all be the poorer.

Who is responsible for this long-standing outreach project? God the Holy Spirit, first; working though the agency of the saints here – inspiring, encouraging, enabling,

Of course, there are countless ways we can love our neighbour; but one impactful way is through supporting AIDS orphans and their caregivers, the women of the Mother’s Union, at St Mark’s church. All part of our Anglican family.

But let me speak personally: I want to record the impact the Mzuzu outreach had, and has, on me.

When I was incumbent here at the turn of the century, I was a married, middle-aged man, the father of three sons, someone who was raised in Peterborough and always lived in the safe, comfortable, confines of southern Ontario. I had travelled in Europe, I had been to Israel with Claire Wade but had little interest in Africa or its problems. I had a historic church to manage and renovate and serve. Visiting Malawi changed me - deepened me, I hope.

Yes, I knew that the Cobourg town-council had partnered with the town of Mzuzu, and that under Mayor Angus Reid had welcomed delegates from Mzuzu town-council to Cobourg (even to Sunday worship here); and it was then - from their first-hand accounts – that I learned more about the devastating reality of that AIDS stricken country. From that stark encounter I was drawn into Colin’s vision: “Could there be a role for us here?”

Well, decades later, there was indeed a role for us - a role we celebrate today! A role that focused and energized this parish, prompting the commitment of key lay leaders; while also reaching out into the broader community, soliciting further involvement and support.

The idea was simple: feeding AIDS orphans.

At the very least, the whole Mzuzu project has deepened the credibility of this church, especially in the eyes of the sceptical and jaded: “Truly those Christians are trying to love their neighbour”! This outreach still stands as a challenge to those selfishly indifferent to the plight of the poor.

One of the great privileges of my life was to receive an invitation to speak at the 50th anniversary service of St Mark’s church, Mzuzu. Guided by the intrepid Colin Turnpenney – and joined by my eldest son, Timothy – the three of us undertook a life-changing adventure.

First, having received a battery of needles for various tropical diseases plus our malaria-medicine, we flew to Paris post-Easter; followed by a 12 hour SA airlines flight to Johannesburg; then a two-hour connecting flight north to Lilongwe; then a four-hour drive north to Mzuzu. Unfortunately, Tim reacted badly to the anti-malaria pills, but within a couple of days recovered.

Each day we travelled by jeep over rough roads around a rural diocese with Bishop Boyle, a robust Brit from Birmingham, visiting churches with mud floors and thatch roofs and thin impoverished people.

The striking thing about Malawi: everyone is young, the majority under 15 years of age or so. Many of their parents are dead. As a result, you have a small older generation trying to care for a huge number of children. The incumbent priest, Fr Chifisi and his wife, for example, inherited the care of 11 grandchildren, I believe, whose parents died of AIDS.

The first night in Mzuzu in our meagre guest house we slept under mosquito-nets. I could hear the man across the hall from me coughing throughout the night. By morning, he was dead. Constant funerals. Thankfully, there have been advances in AIDS care, but poverty and lack of jobs and educational opportunity remain.

Remember, I had been invited not only to observe the reality of the diocese of northern Malawi up-close with Bishop Boyle, but to preach at the 50th anniversary service of St Mark’s.

You think the services are long here! That April 25th 50th Anniversary Sunday was an all-day event: from 9am till 6pm. The sun sets at six and there are no streetlights. The liturgy itself lasted over three hours - lots of singing and clapping and swaying to bands and choirs; (though the church was packed, most of the congregation were seated outside around the building). Each sentence of my sermon was translated into the local Chechewa language. The sermon lasted 45 minutes. I was later rebuked for being too brief!

In Malawi, life is unhurried, relaxed, and there is nowhere to go.

Afterwards came a shared picnic lunch followed by speeches from Bishop Boyle and local politicians – then dramatically, impressively, the rather corpulent Malawian minister of health arrived in her black Mercedes limousine with flags and attendants, looking like the Queen of Sheba in all her glory! After her speech, more singing and dancing, playing and partying. An epic celebration I shan't forget!

It left me with a paradox to ponder: Such irrepressible life and faith and sheer joy! Yet all around, such poverty, sickness and death.

Is God with us more, or with them more?

Finally, who benefits most from this ongoing Mzuzu/Cobourg relationship? Clearly, thousands of orphans have been fed and cared for over the years. Two decades ago, 90% of children had AIDS; today 10%. Women in the Mother's Union have been kept alive by anti-retroviral drugs. There is improved sanitation and healthcare. Scholarships have been provided to girls to further their education beyond the primary level; funds to help boys find a trade, making them employable.

All this generosity is good and worthy and should continue - especially in this new 'gilded age' when hearts seem to be hardening to inequality. St Peter's church is doing what a church should do: Love God and love our neighbour as ourselves.

For years you've offered 'Souptertime' as a community outreach; and internationally, you've admirably supported the Mzuzu project – led by people like Kylie and Colin, and Angus Reid and Hugh Wilmer and Heather Godfrey and Rick Stinson and others. Call it "practical kindness", simple service to others: To persist and persevere in these ministries is impressive.

In today's gospel, Jesus commends the poor widow whose dogged persistence and perseverance finally penetrates a judge's callous indifference! She wears him down and wins justice. (The Mzuzu project is a testament to the persistence of people here!)

Who benefits most? To the extent that we allow ourselves to be prompted, nudged, inspired, by the Holy Spirit to become the people God intends us to be – faithful stewards of all that is entrusted to us – I think perhaps we benefit most from this relationship.

Those who have more to give to those who have little.

Being fed physically is no problem for us; being nourished spiritually, renewed, transformed that requires openness, availability to God, faith.

God's call to us comes in many forms - the call to deeper discipleship to ongoing transformation. By grace, the call to feed AIDS orphans in faraway Mzuzu came here - powerfully.

May that call continue to resonate in our hearts, so that we may gladly respond, to our benefit and the glory of God "whose power working in us can do more than we can ask or imagine"!



Latest report from Lisa Bailey on the ongoing Latrine Project

It has been a year since I wrote an article about the Mzuzu Latrine Project in the St. Peter's newsletter. I had just returned from Mzuzu in November, so I had lots to say about my trip! So, please bear with me as I give you a brief update and some pictures of what has happened over the last year!

We have now built 124 latrines since the work began in 2013, and 12 of those latrines were built in 2025. Some of those 124 latrines are replacements as they toppled in the heavy rains. The latrines are scattered about the city of Mzuzu in different townships and are chosen for orphans who attend the feeding program at St. Mark's and their families (usually a granny, aunt, cousins) based on need. Some of the orphans and their families use inadequate latrines (a simple hole in the ground with tarps for privacy) and some go to the neighbours. The latrines fill with water during the floods and leach into the groundwater, and sometimes children and animals fall in the hole. New latrines are now Skyloo type which is dual composting. One side is used for half the year, then the other half. Compost is taken to use on their small gardens or sold. Most new latrines have just a hole in the cement floor to squat over, but grannies sometimes get the benefit of a cement toilet! The advantage with the Skyloo type is that it has a wide base and is less likely to topple in the heavy floods.

Paul Kamlaza has been managing the latrine program in Mzuzu for many years and later became the director of the feeding program after the death of Father Chifisi. Paul has done an exceptional job of determining the locations of the latrines, overseeing the work done by Peter and his brothers, handing over the keys (a bit of a ceremony) and teaching about how to compost. During the rainy season (roughly the end of December through March) Paul visits all latrines and does maintenance



work, fixing steps, replacing doors and locks etc. He keeps excellent records, providing me with bank statements, accounting expenses (down to the nail), lists of orphan's names and locations and before and after pictures.

The work will continue in 2026, however the people of Mzuzu are currently dealing with extreme flooding with road and bridge washouts and home damage. We will know the full extent of damage to the latrines when Paul completes the maintenance work in the next few months. My thoughts and prayers are with the people of Mzuzu and particularly with Paul and his wife, with Peter and his brothers, and with the orphans and their caregivers.



The above photos show before and after with Paul Kamlaza handing over the keys. The last photo is taken of Peter the head contractor, who is working with Paul, to teach the people how to do composting

The following letters are from 3 orphans who have completed their school and are now working!

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I hope you are doing well. Thank you for your support, I don't know where I would have been without you. You stood as an Angel sent by God to my life since 2008. St. Marks was like my home where my hope was. Your kindness covered my basic needs such as good food, tailoring, school fees and not forgetting the support I got when I was sick. Now I am well, working and the little I get from employment and tailoring, I am able to support myself and my family.



Psalm 107v 1 says “give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever. Your kindness and love have shown me God’s love. May God continue blessing and guiding you all as you are still thinking of my fellow orphans, I left behind at St. Mark’s Orphan Care.

Yours faithfully Fredrick Nyirongo

Mary Gondwe wrote –



I would like to express my deepest and most sincere thanks to my donors for the incredible support you gave me throughout my academic journey, from secondary school to tertiary education. Your generosity opened doors that I could not have opened on my own. At times when the journey felt overwhelming, your belief in me became my strength and motivation to keep pushing forward.

Today I am proud to say that I am an independent young lady Practicing Nurse. This achievement is not mine alone, but it is a reflection of your kindness sacrifice and faith in my potential. Because I am able to serve my community with knowledge, compassion and confidence.

Thank you for investing in my education and future. I will always carry your support in my heart and strive to give back by making a positive difference in the lives of others.

With sincere appreciation.

Mary Gondwe.

Veronica Kandulu wrote – A journey of Hope, Faith and Gratitude



I was born on June 3, 1999, into a humble family of four. My early childhood was marked by love, simplicity, and the strong values instilled in us by our parents. However, in 2003 my life changed profoundly when my father passed away. From that moment on, my siblings and I were raised by a single parent, whose resilience and determination became one of the greatest inspirations of my life. Growing up was not easy. The loss of my father brought financial hardship and by the time I reached junior secondary school, the situation had become extremely difficult. I was rendered destitute, with limited means to continue my education. Like many children in similar circumstances, my future felt uncertain, and the dream of completing school seemed almost impossible.

It was during this vulnerable time that hope arrived through compassion and faith. Through my parish, St. Mark's Anglican Church, God opened a remarkable door. Members of the church established friendships with people in Canada, individuals whose generosity, kindness and commitment to humanity transformed my life. Though we were separated by distance, their hearts were close to mine.

Through their support, I was able to continue and complete my secondary school education in 2017. This was not just financial assistance' it was encouragement, belief, and a powerful reminder that I was not forgotten. Their investment in my education restored my confidence and reignited my dreams. In 2019, with the same spirit of support and perseverance, I enrolled at the Malawi Institute of Tourism. Once again, I was blessed to receive tertiary education support for which I remain deeply grateful. Through hard work and determination, I successfully graduated with a diploma, equipping myself with practical skills and knowledge that prepared me for professional life.

Today, I am employed, self-reliant, and able to support both myself and my family. This is a milestone I do not take lightly. It represents a journey from hardship to stability, from uncertainty to purpose. None of this would have been possible without the grace of God and the unwavering support of those who believed in me when I had little to offer but hope.

As I reflect on this journey, my heart is filled with gratitude. I continually ask God to bless the people of Canada, the friends of St. Mark's Anglican Church, and all those who dedicate their resources, time, and technical skills to uplifting others. Your support does not end with one individual – it creates a ripple effect, empowering families, strengthening communities, and shaping futures.

My prayer is that many more young people, facing challenges similar to those I once faced, may benefit from such generosity and opportunities. May your kindness continue to transform lives, just as it transformed mine.

Veronica Kandulu

Photos from Saturday's feeding day



Report from Paul Kamlaza on the current weather situation



M5 Lakeshore

So far so good Mzuzu was not seriously affected only house damage here and there. Most of the house roofs blown off by the heavy winds. But the roads connected Mzuzu to other cities like Lilongwe and Blantyre completely washed away. Houses, crops like maize and rice fields all washed away.

Lord have mercy upon his people; it is severe in southern parts of Mozambique. Roads, crops and houses all washed away. Since we are still in the rainy season I will be updating you for any

development. Your prayers are our salvation. The above photo shows M5 Lakeshore road, completely cut off.
Paul



Current situation

Lilongwe bridge kudzaza madzi.



How your gifts can help St. Mark's AIDS orphans

\$100 - Purchase 5 family sized mosquito nets to prevent malaria.

Pay an instructor to teach tailoring for 2 months.

Annually make children smile at Christmas with gifts of soap, sugar, salt, and oil.

Purchase new shoes, blankets and used winter clothing for 5 children.

Feed one child every Saturday for 3 months.

\$200 - Provide funding for sick orphans to have hospital visits for 2 months.

Purchase lamp oil for 10 students for one school term... to study at night.

Fund new green agricultural and self-sustaining feeding initiatives.

Purchase shoes and clothes locally for 20 children.

\$300 - Provide special Likuni Phala feeding for one month for HIV children to reduce mortality rates and maintain health.

Provide school uniforms for 5 students.

Provide emergency drugs for 250 children for 2 months

\$500 - Funding a nurse and doctor bi-weekly on Saturdays for priority orphan health checkups... for 2 months.

Purchase of vegetable seeds and plants for small local kitchen gardens.

\$900 - Send one child to secondary school for one year... for uniforms, tuition fees, books and one daily meal.

Tailoring training for girls and boys for 5 months. Additional cost of blankets annually



**For further information contact: Colin Turnpenney,
Co-Ordinator, MAOCP, St. Peter's Church, Cobourg**

(colinv@bell.net)