



THONDWE NEWS APRIL 2025

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Charity No: SC001100

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Sunday Porridge Club

In response to an appeal by the school children in Thondwe, that hunger was their greatest concern we explored the possibility of a large-scale feeding programme at the school. After due consideration and calculating the costs of feeding 2000 children daily we felt it was beyond our means and referred the school to Mary's Meals. Let's see what develops. Meantime the twinning committee requested us to reconsider urgently, so we opted for a church porridge club on Sunday mornings during the "Hunger Months" until the end of April.

So, 100 children are provided with a bowl or cup of porridge every Sunday morning and for many this modest meal may be all they have to eat that day. It is known that it will improve the children's ability to concentrate and learn. This is being trialled as a possible feature of the partnership calendar during future Hunger Months.



Gifts that Grow

The partnership wanted to develop sustainable feeding programmes and responded to a twinning committee discussion on the value of providing fruit bushes and trees. These were popular and many families turned up to receive 100 banana plants (2 each) and 25 people received 50 mango trees (2 each), that will produce nutritious fruit for home consumption or be sold for income.



Bibles for Thondwe Youth

The students at St Anthony's secondary school were delighted to know they will receive 30 Good News Bibles sent to Thondwe through the BananaBox Trust, a Dundee based charity. Following the success of this donation from Teviot Church we have received another 50 new Bibles from Earlston church that will be sent in the next container.



Learning Together

This year on the traditional *Warm Heart of Africa Day*, St Ronan's Primary school shared their learning at the whole school assembly. Each member of the school's Malawi group shared their thoughts about life in their twinned community using photos and videos. The group also prepared a list of tasks, activities and workshops for classes to work on during the rest of the morning to celebrate this special day in the school calendar, plus making a football from recycled material that was used during the break!



Two More Wrinkly Roofs

Meet Annie Chipatala, a member of the Thondwe sewing group and young single mum Ethel Malekabu with her daughter Falida. Both are now enjoying much improved shelter provided by the Wrinkly Roof campaign, surviving the recent cyclone storm Jude. Thanks to the 3 ITW church members who sponsored these home improvements.

Talking with Texts: Mobile phones Empower Deaf Youth in Malawi



Imagine how surprised we were to discover that 10 phones sent out to Malawi with our shipment of Bibles were "intercepted" by our friends in Ekwendeni. With our permission they were diverted to profoundly deaf young people who do not have access to sign language teaching. We might find it annoying that kids text each other all the time, even when you're trying to talk to them. But imagine if a child couldn't communicate at all, that's when a mobile can become a lifeline. Please share this story with friends and collect phones to empower hard of hearing children in Malawi.



Moderator Comes full Circle

The Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson worshipped at our church on 2nd March to share his experiences with us following his visit to our twinned congregation in Thondwe in August 2024. He congratulated us on our twinning highlighting the importance of our two-way process- it's not just about giving; it's about celebrating what we receive from Thondwe.

He recalled visiting Thondwe primary school where classes were on average about 80 and it had no lighting due to the lack of electricity. Head Teacher Annie showed him the solar powered study lights, rented and taken home by the learners allowing them to do their homework by night. This inspired his Moderators Challenge, *"so simple but life changing and I thank the good people of the village for bringing me down to earth from the lofty heights of being Moderator, bringing me down from the mountain and recognising that God has a job for me to do"*

Representatives from St Ronan's school Malawi group and their teacher Ms Nicola Watt shared a little about their learning at the service.

The Moderator presented the church with a tile and tartan cloth Tote that will be mounted in a wooden frame by a member of our congregation.



TGP (Thondwe Girls Project)

Another successful year making, distribution and education of a class of approx. 150 girls from Thondwe Primary School receiving their Menstrual Health Kits. These kits are a way to Let the Girls attend school every day, even during their periods.

The distribution team shown to the right are Rabbecca (Project lead on the left) Catherine and Annie from the Local Church sewing group and Ethel, who is a community worker Ethel is the chair of a 10-women community group, put together to help educate the girls guiding them in making good choices that will allow them to have a good education which can give them more choice in their lives. Both groups working to help keep the girls in school.



Garden of Learning

Malawi's economy is based on agriculture with 85% of the population living in rural farming areas. This is why the partnership created a school garden to provide training sessions on growing food and simple farming techniques, supporting the classroom part of the curriculum. The learners prepare, weed, water and sow the seeds to grow maize, peas, potatoes, okra and tomatoes. It's an encouraging harvest this year despite the boundary fence being destroyed by Storm Jude. A "live" fence is planned.



Growing Food for the Community in the Church Garden

The church Garden is a 3-acre field that our church bought for the Thondwe church. The field is prepared, sown and harvested by the congregation for the benefit of those who need support for food. This year the partnership worked together to diversify the crop varieties, hopefully offsetting the impact of any climate events. The team reporting on the trial were happy with the results of the maize and pigeon peas but too much rain at the wrong time affected the ground nuts. The harvest will begin in earnest in 2-3 weeks when everyone comes together to do their bit.



Repairing the School Water Bore Hole

The current priority is to repair a bore hole to provide water for the school and local community. The District Council does not have funds to do the repairs, and its absence is putting pressure on the other working borehole. We will provide funding for a local contractor to purchase the spare parts to enable a team to carry out a repair at a total cost of £475

St Ronan's Primary school raised £175 through sales of a cookbook, and it is hoped that the provision of another borehole might enable a feeding programme to be set up.