

April 12, 2019

Dear Trinitarians:

I am just back from twelve days in Sub-Saharan Africa. The occasion was a tour of mission projects that flow from a 7-year partnership between Episcopal Relief and Development and the Zambian Anglican Church Outreach Program (ZACOP). On our first day we flew from Johannesburg, South Africa to the north central city of Ndola, Zambia. From there we drove three hours into the countryside to visit one of ZACOP's *mwataya* (mwah-tie-yah), or, program sites. ZACOP administers 116 *mwataya* in 5 Anglican dioceses, and last year served over 27,000 children (67% under 3 years old), educated 13,500 caregivers/parents, and trained 1236 volunteers. The program is enormous and its goals, focused on early childhood development of the most vulnerable, are ambitious: strengthen cognitive, language, and motor skills, plus social-emotional development; broaden access to primary health care and its efficacy; increase food security; create family economic survival through microloans and savings and loan programs.

The hard edge of a trip like this one is that death is evident everywhere. Life expectancy of a male Zambian is *fifty years old*. One of the programs we visited deployed "elders" into the classroom to share stories and fables with the children. But the "elders" were forty years old, *10 years* younger than me. More than 13% of all Zambians are infected with HIV/AIDS. After visiting a school for 3-6 year olds (they were so adorable and eager!) we were told that every, single child there had suffered the death of one or both parents from AIDS. Less than 50% of children in Zambia are immunized properly, if at all, and many suffer from "stunting"- failure to grow from malnutrition. And, striking very close to my own heart, most Zambian children born with any kind of physical or mental disabilities simply do not live past their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. The services and systems they need to thrive just don't exist.

Though Zambia is often referred to as the "Switzerland" of Sub-Saharan Africa, having successfully avoided armed conflict since its independence 52 years ago, it is still subject to the hardships of a post-colonial country: lack of infrastructure, services, leadership, education, and finances. It took us more than 3 hours, for example, to drive the 20 miles from Ndola to the *mwataya*. As ZACOP's Executive Director, the unstoppable Felicia Sakala told us, "We have so many challenges: climate change (drought alternating with too much rainfall), poor infrastructure and road conditions, unreliable vehicles, lack of permanent structures, addiction, and disease."

*And yet* for those with eyes to see it, renewal and rebirth and resurrection is also evident everywhere. As we approached the *mwataya*, hundreds of children, teachers, and caregivers poured out of the brightly painted buildings. Drums appeared, and dancers dressed in dazzling Zambian fabrics twirled and gyrated, and singing filled the vast blue sky. "You give us all such encouragement by being here," Felicia graciously told us.

Outside the school, hundreds of mothers with babies strapped to their backs stood in line for well-baby checks and weigh-ins. A baby scale, resembling one you'd weigh your produce in at

Whole Foods, swung from a nearby tree. The *mwataya* has increased the number of children in the community up to date on their immunizations from 58% to 96%.

We witnessed a community savings and loan program, where each week members (who give .40/week to belong) sit under a tree, count their combined funds aloud, and decide on which loan requests to grant - for seeds, or livestock, or to start a small business.

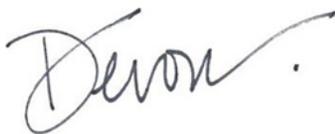
We visited homes with malaria nets and heard how the *mwataya* has single-handedly and exponentially brought down the instances of malaria. We witnessed cooking demonstrations, in which trained volunteers taught caregivers how to provide the maximum amount of protein and nutrients in available ingredients.

We heard about toy-making workshops, and kitchen gardens, and home visits, and parenting support groups. And all around us – joyfulness. Hope from the ashes. Communities raising themselves up with grit and determination, by the grace of God. It is a miraculous thing to witness what God can do with dust.

Sometimes we have to go far away to recognize the realities – maybe even for the first time – of our daily lives at home. What I learned anew, standing on the other side of the earth, is that this rhythm of incarnation – death -- resurrection -- incarnation -- death -- resurrection is a never-ending pattern, one set in motion by God long before Jesus, from the very birth of the first stars to the creation of the entire circle of life on this planet. The cycle is, in the words of Richard Rohr, “a universal pattern of the undoing of death.” Once we start looking for this rhythm of resurrection, my friends, *it is everywhere*.

I suspect that we are each vulnerable to approaching Easter Sunday as a commemoration of a single moment in the past – when God raised Jesus from the dead, symbolized in an empty tomb. To be fair, that is part of what we’re doing on Easter morning. Yeah Jesus! But even more than that, Easter is the celebration of the truth that the eternal pattern of incarnation—death—resurrection—incarnation—death—resurrection is happening *now*, in *this* moment, and always. Our lives are in perpetual motion, living a pattern of death and resurrection as old as the cosmos. I guess that’s what we mean when we talk about trying to live as “Easter people” – people who recognize this ancient cycle, who look for it, delight in it, have faith in it, cling with dear life to it. We are each dying all the time – in ways big and small. But the gift of Easter is reminder that after death of any kind, God promises us renewal and rebirth and, dare we say it, joy.

I am so happy to be home in time to walk Holy Week and celebrate Easter with you. You are precious to me. Trinity is a holy place because here we are not afraid to risk our whole lives on the promise of resurrection. Happy Easter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Devon". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a period at the end.

The Rev. Devon Anderson, Rector

## Holy Week and Easter Worship Services

**Palm Sunday**                      Sunday, April 14, 2019                      8:00 & 10:15 am

*Join us at 9:15 for a triumphal parade around the neighborhood.*

**Maundy Thursday**                      Thursday, April 18, 2019                      6:30 pm

*We begin in the main sanctuary, led by our youth, with scripture, prayers, and preaching. Then we move to Chamberlain Hall for dinner (catered by Holy Land), and Eucharist. Then, together, we ready the church for Good Friday, and conclude the service back in the sanctuary with the stripping of the altar. This service is intended for Trinitarians of all ages, designed to feed the heart, mind, soul, and body.*

**Good Friday**                      Friday, April 19, 2019                      6:30 pm

*Fourteen stations on stretch canvas created by members of Trinity form the essence of this service. We begin in the chapel with the Good Friday liturgy, walk the Way of the Cross together, stopping at each station for prayer and scripture and singing, and end in the main sanctuary with the Solemn Collects.*

**Holy Saturday**                      Saturday, April 20, 2019                      10:00 am – 12:00 pm

*Together we walk the story of Jesus' last days with interactive stations. Focused on telling the story with children in mind, this service is meaningful for people of any age.*

**Easter Sunday**                      Sunday, April 21, 2019                      8:00 & 10:15 am

*Festive potluck coffee hours will follow each service, complete with Rector's mimosas.*

### Easter Flowers

Around the church you will find envelopes to contribute to Easter flowers (and they will be spectacular this year!). Please send your contributions to the office, designating in whose name your flowers are given. The **deadline** for Easter Flower donations is Wednesday, April 17, 2019 by noon.

### Easter Offering

As is our custom, an Easter offering will be taken and given to the ministries of Trinity Church, in addition to the life-giving work of Episcopal Relief and Development. Enclosed you will find an Easter offering envelope. Please be generous!

### Office Closed

The Trinity Office will be closed the week after Easter (April 22-27) so staff might enjoy some well-deserved. Phone messages will be checked twice per day. For pastoral emergencies, please contact the Rev. Devon Anderson (612.655.0314).