**Bamford Chapel and Norden URC**

**Service September 12th 2021**

Good morning. My name is Margaret Ogden and I am a member of the church in the World group at Bamford Chapel and Norden URC. As the title suggests, the committee endeavours to be outward looking, to recognise the needs of people who perhaps live on the other side of the world and respond in whatever ways we can. Each year, among other things, we support the work of Christian Aid by involving ourselves, and many others within our church in the House-to-House collection. But at this time of the year we also try to find a project somewhere in the world through which we can learn about the country and its people’s needs and respond in whatever way we can but especially by raising money. During this service, which will largely be led by members of the committee, you will be learning about the project we will be supporting this year.

**First and foremost we come to worship God so let’s hear the call to worship.**

Come and worship the living God and Saviour of the world.

Come and worship Jesus who died and was raised again.

Come and worship the Spirit who renews and empowers us to be God’s people in the world.

We come to offer Father, Son and Holy Spirit our thanks, our praise and our worship.

**So we sing together a hymn which reminds us of God’s love for the whole world.**

He's got the whole world in His hands  
He's got the whole wide world in His hands  
He's got the whole world in His hands  
He's got the whole world in His hands

He's got everybody here in His hands  
He's got everybody here in His hands  
He's got everybody here in His hands  
He's got the whole world in His hands

*He's got the whole world…*

He's got the little tiny baby in His hands  
He's got the little tiny baby in His hands  
He's got the little tiny baby in His hands  
He's got the whole world in His hands

*He's got the whole world…*

He's got you and me brother in His hands  
He's got you and me sister in His hands  
He's got you and me brother in His hands  
He's got the whole world in His hands

*He's got the whole world…*

And now another member of the committee, Carole Greaves, is going to introduce this year’s project to us.

**Introduction to Project.**

Good morning, everyone, it’s great to be here with the rest of the Church in the World Team to introduce you to Bamford Chapel and Norden URC Annual Developing World Project.

My role today is to explain how the project works!

The Church in the World Group work together to choose a project in the Spring of each year. Once we have explored different options and have selected a project against some previously agreed criteria we produce a summary and present to the Elders and if approved then to the Church Meeting. This year’s project is the 35th - we started in Sri Lanka in 1987.

The Project is then launched in September and runs through until Christmas Day. During that period, we are encouraged to give personally if we can. Alongside the personal giving there are also some events to raise funds i.e. launch meal, breakfast at chapel, meal at a local college, Brownie Coffee Evening, Rainbows collect 20 pence’s etc.

Giving can be via brown envelopes that you will find in church if you are a non-tax payer, and the white envelopes if you are a tax payer (Gift Aid can be claimed back which increases our contributions by 25%). If you want to give via the bank account please ask and we can arrange with the Treasurer.

The Project allows us to give specifically to a Charity to develop a priority area of their work and provides positive and sustainable outcomes for local people in the chosen county.

Whilst doing this it also gives us a chance as a community of all ages to learn about the needs of others and the country, they live in. We can share our wealth and for those across the world who have so little compared to us. One of our main forms of support is to pray regularly for the people presenting their needs to God.

I have recently been reflecting on the many years that I have been involved in the Project there are so many highlights, we are currently, led by Rebecca Abbott, pulling together a summary of all the projects to date, and where possible obtaining an update. I personally have a few highlights:

1. Supporting the furnishing a Safe House in Tanzania for young women fleeing female genital mutilation, I was fortunate enough to visit this project in 2017 with Addie and Barbara Redmond and my eldest daughter Alison. The project continues its amazing and life-saving work under the leadership of Rhobi Samwelly who visited our church during our giving period in 2014.
2. Orphan Hope, we raised money for orphaned children in India in 2012, I along with many others were deeply moved by the extent of poverty in a country which also had so much wealth. Peter and Donna Faulds were truly inspirational in their work building an orphanage in India.

You will of course have many highlights yourself.

***Guess the project year***

Below is a list of projects in recent years. Can you guess which year they were in? Answers below

1. **Karibuni Children, Kenya**

This year we supported Karibuni Trust, to sponsor children through education

1. **Drum Beat Children’s Foundation, Uganda**

To reduce food poverty amongst families of Drum Beat children, we purchased land for livestock and crops as a source of income and food.

1. **Rwanda Boat**

We raised money for the village of Gasundwe to have their own form of transport. The village formed a cooperative, and using this boat started earning money.

1. **Kagando Hospital, Uganda**

This year we supported the hospital in Kagando Village in Uganda

1. **Shalom, Grey Town, South Africa**

We raised money for play equipment for the nursery for children living in the slum area or on railway lines

1. **Namibia**

We raised money for a new building at the Church in Namibia for training people who are HIV supporters, Kindergarten groups and more.

**Introduction to our speaker**

We now turn to Project 2021, after searching and prayerful consideration we once again looked at Medic Malawi, this charity was first introduced to us by Mike Lucas in 2015. It kept coming back to mind and so here we are embarking on supporting Medic Malawi.

As I am sure you will be aware Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and there are very high rates of death amongst children and adults. HIV/AIDS is prevalent and the people have suffered greatly throughout COVID-19 pandemic due to poor health and lack of health provision.

I would like to now introduce Sian Howell-Jones one of the Trustees from Medic Malawi. All our communication with Medic Malawi’s Director and Trustees has been via zoom and email so we are delighted to have Sian come along today in person and all the way from Blackburn, as our local contact with the organisation!

**Children’s Address**

I wonder what your school day looks like? I thought we would have a think about how our school day compares with the children in rural Malawi – that is life out in villages which are many miles from any services like shops and other places we are used to having around us.

Perhaps you are woken up by your alarm around 7 am? Do you stumble across the landing with your eyes closed and find yourself in the bathroom where you splash nice warm water over your face to wake yourself up a bit. A nice bowl of chocolate cheerios or suitable breakfast is awaiting you in the kitchen before you dress and race out the door, into the car to head for your school.

Our two Malawian children will have a very different school day from ours. They go to school but many of their friends who live in their village do not go because they can’t afford the money to go (families have to pay for some schools and most do not have that money to spare on educating their children). Many children are desperate to attend school because they really want to learn to read, to do figures and sums and to grow up to get a good job. If they did not go to school, they would be working in the fields with other children, raking crops, carrying bricks or helping with the fish catch.

But before they set off on the long walk to school with other children from their village (which will take them around 2 hours), they would have to rise early to walk to the water pump with the mums and sisters, sweep up the yard, set out the rice or vegetables for some food for the day and then gather their things to set off to learn. At the end of the day, they will have many tasks to do for the family as well as try to do some homework for her lessons the next day.

The classrooms are very basic and lack comfort and inspiration (this is what Medic Malawi are raising money for today) but the children are happy to sit for many hours, listening to their teacher and writing on whatever the school has managed to source for the children – usually chalk boards.

How do you think you would like to be in that type of school?

**It is at this point on a Sunday morning when the children and young people leave the service to go into Junior Church. Let’s take this moment to prayer for them.**

“Lord, thank you for our Junior Church, thank you for all the junior Church leaders who help our young people to learn more about you and how you want us to live our lives. Be with them as they praise you through their crafts, games, songs and stories, be them all every Sunday.” Amen

**And now we sing our next hymn** ***Jesus put this song into our hearts***. As is our custom we shall sing each verse a little faster than the previous one.

Jesus put this song into our hearts  
Jesus put this song into our hearts  
It's a song of joy no one can take away  
Jesus put this song into our hearts

Jesus taught us how to live in harmony  
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony  
Different faces, different races, He made us one  
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony

Jesus taught us how to be a family  
Jesus taught us how to be a family  
Loving one another with the love that He gives  
Jesus taught us how to be a family

Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing  
Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing  
Changed our tears of sadness into rivers of joy  
Jesus turned our sorrow into a dance

**Let’s pray together**

Loving God we have so much to be thankful for. We thank you for all the things that we take for granted day by day…

For our families and friends; for homes rich in comfort; for an abundance of food to eat and clean water to drink;

For books to read and the ability to read them; for music and art and senses to appreciate them;

For the beauty of creation…flowers, trees, birds and animals; for oceans teaming with fish; for soaring mountains, hills and plains

For medicines and health care; for opportunities for education, work and leisure; for information at our finger tips and technology at our disposal

And above all we have a knowledge of your love and your forgiveness.

We ask you Lord to forgive us when we are blind to all these blessings and fail to share what we have with others. Thank you that Medic Malawi gives us another opportunity to obey the command of Jesus to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. May we respond gladly and generously.

We ask our prayer in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray together saying

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

And now we listen to the reading from the Bible

**Romans 12 1 – 8 Humble Service in the Body of Christ**

**12**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2**Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**3**For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. **4**For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **5**so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **6**We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A1-8&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28252a)] faith; **7**if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; **8**if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2012%3A1-8&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28254b)] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

**We sing again: *I the Lord of sea and sky***

I, the Lord of sea and sky  
I have heard my people cry  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save  
I who made the stars of night  
I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord  
If You lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart*

I, the Lord of wind and flame  
I will tend the poor and lame  
I will set a feast for them  
My hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide  
'Til their hearts be satisfied  
I will give my life to them  
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord…..*

**And now it is my great pleasure to invite Sian to speak to us again.**

I am very grateful to you here at Bamford and Norden URC for inviting me to share with you the needs and challenges for those living in Chimbye in rural Malawi. For those who, like me when I first had anything to do with Malawi, don’t actually know where it is - this is one of the smallest African countries cradled by Mozambique and bordered by Zambia and Tanzania.

I thought I would explain how I came to be passionate about Malawi and how Medic Malawi have become involved in the work of Education in the rural villages, particularly for Chalizya school in Chimbye, in this region of Kasungu.

My husband used to work for Birmingham Diocese and they had a link with the whole of Malawi (it now has 4 Dioceses for the whole country) and he travelled there numerous times a year. He made such good friends and they constantly asked him to take his wife but I was busy at home with our 4 young children. When our youngest did a year out in Malawi, I had no excuse but to accompany him and fell in love with the country called ‘The Warm Heart of Africa’.

The name Medic Malawi might confuse you somewhat when you engage with donating money to a school. Well – support for the Malawian poor began in a small village where access to healthcare as well as education was impossible – days’ walk to any services. A local clergyman’s daughter contracted Malaria and having managed to get to a hospital for treatment, they got her home but found that the dose had been too high and she sadly died – the clergyman vowed that he would raise money and support to build some healthcare in the village so that rural people were less vulnerable.

In addition, Education is a pivotal issue in poor countries like this – when communities have no access to education, they remain trapped in poverty, they can’t send their children to school and so the cycle of poverty continues.

Let me tell you abouts Sapelain – his story is inspiring: he attended Chalizya primary school and was the only child to gain sponsorship to attend secondary school, which was 5 hours walk from his village - and he did this every day!!! Our Director Tom met him on a visit and we have been determined to support him ever since. “My village needs help but no one ever comes” he told us in 2009. That lead us on a journey to help transform Chalizya School.

The project we want you to support has three parts

1. Library which will be a resource to empower the whole community £3000

2. School Office the Head Teacher Mr Maonga says, ”An office will transform our school and empower my staff to support our children and young people”. £3000

3. Solar Power in the library and the staff office will enable evening use allowing staff to work and the community to use the library during the long dark evenings. £2000

If you are unable to meet those figures, we try hard to add to any donations received.

Thank you and bless you for your kindness and faithfulness in giving.

**Recognising the need for others to share in the things that we take for granted, we now sing** ***Beauty for brokenness***

Beauty for brokenness  
Hope for despair  
Lord, in your suffering  
This is our prayer  
Bread for the children  
Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset  
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives  
Cures for their ills  
Work for the craftsman  
Trade for their skills  
Land for the dispossessed  
Rights for the weak  
Voices to plead the cause  
Of those who can't speak

*God of the poor*

*Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray  
Melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain  
Come, change our love  
From a spark to a flame*

Refuge from cruel wars  
Havens from fear  
Cities for sanctuary  
Freedoms to share  
Peace to the killing-fields  
Scorched earth to green  
Christ for the bitterness  
His cross for the pain

Rest for the ravaged earth  
Oceans and streams  
Plundered and poisoned  
Our future, our dreams  
Lord, end our madness  
Carelessness, greed  
Make us content with  
The things that we need

*God of the poor……*

Lighten our darkness  
Breathe on this flame  
Until your justice  
Burns brightly again  
Until the nations  
Learn of your ways  
Seek your salvation  
And bring you their praise

*God of the poor….*

**Prayers of Intercession**

In our prayer we have a response. When we say, “Lord hear our prayer.” please join us in the response: Empower us to play our part in your answer to our prayer.

Dear God

We pray for the world.

We are concerned about inequality in our world. We have plenty while many go without, we have more than enough to eat, many go hungry, we have clean water on tap, many walk miles to get just a drop, nearly 90% of us have had at least one vaccination against Covid, while only 1% in low-income countries.

We are concerned about the way people abuse power leading to wars, violence. It is causing people to leave their homes and undertake perilous journeys to seek safety in another country. May we make refugees feel welcome and safe here. We think especially at this time of those in Afghanistan who have been unable to leave and pray that they may find safety.

We are concerned about the climate crisis. We see increases in forest fires, flooding, plastic pollution and energy consumption. We don’t want to destroy this beautiful planet you gave us to look after.

Lord hear our prayer (All) **Empower us to play our part in your answer to our prayer**.

We pray for our country

Be with our political leaders and give them the wisdom to get us back to a fully functioning society which cares for those in need. We pray especially for those who were temporarily housed during the pandemic as that comes to an end very soon.

We pray for the NHS who have had to cope with the pandemic and now are trying to catch up on all postponed treatments.

May we as your people find our voice to speak out for Justice and equality for all both here and in the world.

Lord hear our prayer (All) **Empower us to play our part in your answer to our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves

We pray for our project with Medic Malawi, for the people of Malawi especially in and for the work of Medic Malawi. Inspire us to be generous in our giving and may our money make a real difference to those we aim to support.

We pray for our church. May the new start after the lockdown lead to a renewal of our determination to grow your kingdom here.

We pray for those who are suffering physically, mentally or spiritually. And for those who are sad and disoriented by bereavement or family break-up. In the silence, we name those known to us.

Lord hear our prayer (All) **Empower us to play our part in your answer to our prayer.** Amen

To bring our worship to a close we sing the final hymn***: I’ll go in the strength of the Lord***

I’ll go in the strength of the Lord,In paths He has marked for my feet;I’ll follow the light of His Word,Nor shrink from the dangers I meet.His presence my steps shall attend;His fullness my wants shall supply;On Him, till my journey shall end,My unwavering faith shall rely.

I’ll go, I’ll go in the strength,  
I’ll go in the strength of the Lord;  
I’ll go, I’ll go in the strength,  
I’ll go in the strength of the Lord.

I’ll go in the strength of the LordTo work He appoints me to do;In joy which His smile doth affordMy soul shall her vigour renew.His wisdom shall guard me from harm,His power my sufficiency prove;I’ll trust His omnipotent arm,And prove His unchangeable love.

I’ll go, I’ll go in the strength,……

I’ll go in the strength of the LordTo conflicts which faith will require;His grace as my shield and reward,My courage and zeal shall inspire.Since He gives the word of commandTo meet and encounter the foe,With His sword of truth in my hand,To suffer and triumph I’ll go.

I’ll go, I’ll go in the strength,  
I’ll go in the strength of the Lord;  
I’ll go, I’ll go in the strength,  
I’ll go in the strength of the Lord.

I’ll go in the strength of the Lord.

**The Blessing**

Go into the world with your eyes open to the needs of others and your ears alert to their cry;

With your lips ready to speak the name of Jesus and your heart longing to share his love.

And the blessing of God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen

Guess the project year (answers)

1. 2007 2. 2018 3. 2016 4. 1993 5. 2009 6. 2006