

Life in Lundazi

Cultivating Partnerships in Christ

Melissa Johnson, PC(USA) Mission Co-Worker

Serving in Zambia

The Power of "We"

Dear Friends,

I hope this finds you all warm and well. It's a beautiful day herein Atlanta. I'm including my most recent newsletter, but also I want to include a reminder about the upcoming ZZMUSA Virtual Conference on February 25-26. It's absolutely free to attend and you will be able to connect and learn so much from our friends in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Madagascar. I hope to see your smiling face!

Blessings,

Melissa



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Winter 2022



The Power of “We”

Melissa Johnson

*Mission co-worker
serving in Zambia*

Dear friends,

I am frequently asked about my journey to serving in Zambia. The journey was a long one that included several short-term mission trips to Vietnam and one to Peru. The trip that truly set our hearts on fire with God's call to serve was my husband Charles' first trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo. After his trip, we made three more trips to Congo, and we realized that God was truly calling us to use the gifts God had given us to serve God's people in a country far from our home in San Antonio, Texas.

During Charles' first trip to Congo, he met PC (USA) mission co-workers Bob and Kristi Rice, Jeff and Christy Boyd, Ruth Brown, and Larry and Inge Sthreshley. These introductions were life-changing because they were our first realization that PC(USA) was still sending mission co-workers to serve around the world. As we continued our short-term trips to Congo over the next three years, we began learning how the PC(USA) works in partnership with global church partners. We also learned how American congregations and individuals were also a part of that partnership through mission networks. When we learned about the Congo Mission Network (CMN), we attended two of their meetings and were impressed with the way the CMN was working in partnership with the church in Congo. Ultimately, we helped inspire our church in San Antonio, Northwood Presbyterian, to host one of the CMN meetings that resulted in a long-term relationship, not only with the church in Congo but also with the local San Antonio Congolese community. Once Charles and I began serving in Zambia, we learned about the Zambia Zimbabwe Mozambique USA Mission Network (ZMZMUSA).

Mission networks like the CMN and ZMZMUSA help bring together Presbyterians from around the

United States who share a common international mission focus and help facilitate the building and maintaining of healthy partnerships. I have been impressed with how the ZMZMUSA strives not only to educate U.S. congregations about our global partners in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique but understands the power of “we”—getting to know our global church partners by including them in decisions, listening to their voices and hearing their stories.

Over the past several months, I have been working with the ZMZMUSA to help plan for their upcoming virtual conference. One of the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the increased use of virtual meetings. Zoom allows us to include our friends in Zambia and Zimbabwe in planning this conference (each committee has at least one member from one of our global partners). The virtual nature of this conference will hopefully a wider group of people interested in God's mission and work in these four countries (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and the U.S.) to attend without the time and expense of travel.

The theme for this year's virtual ZMZMUSA conference held on February 25-26, 2022, will be “Persevering through Pain, United in Christ.” The planning team is acutely aware that pain has been abundant in all of our countries and around the world. During the six-hour virtual conference (three hours each day), we are planning for many



Rev. Wezzi Ziba, one of the CCAP Zambia pastors who will be participating in the ZMZMUSA Virtual Conference



Rev. Sevatt Kabaghe, General Secretary for the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Synod of Zambia and the co-convenors for the ZZMUSA Virtual Conference and will be speaking about the current situation in Zambia.

opportunities to celebrate our mutual faith through worship, singing and dancing from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and the USA. The conference will let you hear the voices from multiple denominations, countries and perspectives and thanks to the virtuality of this year's conference. We will be hearing the voices of two of my friends in Zambia, Rev. Sevatt Kabaghe (General Secretary for the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Zambia) and Rev. Wezzie Ziba (CCAP-Zambia), as well as many others from Zimbabwe as well. We will have virtual question and answer sessions where you can meet leaders from our global partners and people across the U.S. I am really looking forward to hearing the song written specifically for our meeting and recorded by choirs across Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

On the first day of the conference, we will spend time sharing how we have been able to preserve through the pain of this pandemic and where we have seen the world become more united in Christ. Theological education will be discussed, and we will hear about global partnerships between

theological institutions in our four partner countries and how those relationships impact the life of the global church.

On Saturday, we will focus on how the COVID-19 pandemic has created a health crisis, not just because of the disease itself but because of other health-related issues that have occurred because of COVID: hunger, domestic violence, drug abuse, increased unemployment, lack of attention and resources for other serious diseases, and of course equity in vaccine availability.

Rev. Kim Graber, co-convener of the Health Committee, shared: "As we persevere in this difficult time, we all have had different ways of showing our faith and God's love in the world. Our partner countries and denominations continued to visit the sick; they continued to provide educational opportunities; they continued to care for their church leaders; they continued to search for ways to persevere. And they came up with some creative solutions. We might even say that this time of COVID has been both a challenge and a gift."

I encourage you to register and attend the ZZMUSA Virtual Conference so you can learn, listen and share with our partners. Our faith in Jesus Christ has helped us cope through these difficult times and move forward. Join us for a time of inspirational worship and encouragement as we pursue the network's goals. Go to my Mission Connections page to find the flier and registration link.

I am thankful for each and every one of you and your prayers and support of God's mission in Zambia, and I look forward to seeing your beautiful faces on February 25 and 26th at the ZZMUSA Virtual Conference.

Melissa

Please see below for the updated fund numbers for supporting Melissa's ministry.

Thank you for reading our letter!

Please consider supporting Presbyterian Mission through our ministry. We are grateful for your prayers, personal communication and financial support.

Gifts may be sent to:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

On the memo line, please write:

"In honor of Melissa Johnson—E132192" (individual giving)
"In honor of Melissa Johnson—D500115" (congregational giving)

Give online: pcusa.org/charles-and-melissa-johnson

For more ways to engage in Presbyterian Mission, please email mission.support@pcusa.org.

Thank you for your faithful support.



**ZAMBIA ZIMBABWE
MOZAMBIQUE USA
(ZZMUSA)
MISSION NETWORK**

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

PERSEVERING THROUGH PAIN; UNITED IN CHRIST

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2022 and
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2022**

11:00 AM—2:00 PM EASTERN TIME EACH DAY



**THE CONFERENCE IS FREE OF CHARGE
A DONATION IS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED
REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
FOR MORE DETAILS AND TO REGISTER
VISIT WWW.T.LY/XNe2**

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