

Tigawane - ELCM Sharing

News Issue No.: 22 Vol. 3 January – March 2007

The Lord Bishop Bvumbwe donates bicycle ambulance at Madisi clinic

Madisi clinic was officially opened last year, the hospital has been operating well and it is becoming one of the clinics in the country which are doing well. ELCM Madisi clinic, is situated 80 km from LL city along M1 road to Kasungu, Although the services at the clinic are good but still more it is facing a lot of challenges, so because of that Manet +Plus donated one bicycle ambulance to the clinic. This gift will really help the clinic when there is need to refer patients to the hospital. The Bishop thanked the organization for the assistance, he however advised those who will be using the ambulance to take care of it because the ambulance is for the community. Bishop Bvumbwe inspected the hospital first before he handing over the ambulance to the clinical officer at Madisi Mr. Chauwa and he recommended the cleanliness that is found at the clinic to continue. More than 20 – 30 people both adults and children are treated everyday at the clinic. After having interview with the group village headman of the area, the chief thanked Bishop Bvumbwe and the whole Church for the commitment it renders to Malawians especially the rural communities who are facing a lot of Challenges because of poverty, The chief said. The clinical officer at Madisi Mr. Chauwa explained that the clinic has been operating well and people are now coming in large number after knowing the good services other patients have been receiving. The patients that are getting the treatment at the clinic are now complaining that the centre is just too small as compared to the number of patients who have been coming to receive medication at this clinic. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi is a member of Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi (CHAM) and the Church putting much effort on the life of the human being on both spiritual life and physical life, hence the clinic at Madisi. The main problem which was identified is the high rate HIV / AIDS prevalence in the Church and community which has facilitated most opportunistic infections. The project, which goes along with the Mobile Health Clinic, has really relieved people in the surrounding rural communities who were unable to access treatment due to inadequate financial resources. The clinic charges minimal amounts to allow people afford the treatment while the clinic sustains the services.

Reported By: Patrick Mwanyongo
Assistant Information Officer

ELCM HIV / AIDS DESK HOLDS YOUTH PEER EDUCATION IN SIX DEANARIES

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi is one of the Churches in Malawi which is playing a great role in teaching young people in their daily life. More young people are vulnerable to sexual abuse which causes early pregnancies in girls, contraction of HIV /AIDS; drop outs from school and early parenting. The Church has decided to hold Youth Peer Education Seminars that have much more focused on Awareness and Life Skills Education and Spirituality. The seminars have helped many young people to be aware of HIV /AIDS and acquire life skills that have facilitated in the reduction of early pregnancies, drop out from school and early marriages. Since the program started experience has shown that in between 2003-2004 in the choir groups, 2 girls fell pregnant each year but in 2005 the situation has changed to 1 or none in other Choir Groups. The Church has now wedded 6 young couples from December 2005 – September 2006 at ELCM

Church centre a thing that has never happened before at a Congregation. Although the Church has encountered a number of achievements, it has also faced a number of challenges and the main ones are; Poverty, high divorce rate in families, illiteracy and losing of many parents due to HIV / AIDS.

Reported By: Stella Nyasulu
ELCM HIV / AIDS, Human Rights & Gender COORDINATOR

A SHORT STORY ON DIAKONIA FEEDING CENTRES

Diakonia is a department of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi. It basically focuses on offering services to unprivileged orphaned children under five of age. The main aim is to reduce morbidity and mortality rates of the under five by addressing their nutritional demands in Malawi. Due to HIV / AIDS pandemic which has caused various opportunistic infections and loss of parents, the number of orphans has significantly increased. It is in this regard that Diakonia was proposed and is now implementing the feeding program. Diakonia has basically two components of its services namely, feeding and mobile clinics. The target is on under five Orphans, Vulnerable Children in the Church and all its surrounding communities. In the Feeding Centers Diakonia provides foodstuff like, Likuni Phala, cooking oil, and sugar as well as soap. The mobile department offers medication to the children every month from September to March every year. In this case the children are weighed to see if there is any improvement. At times of implementation, the Administrative Secretary and mama Bishop visits feeding centers to donate extra items, like mosquito nets, clothes and beddings. Since the program started the lives of children is changing every month and the children who were in critical condition their health have been improved.

Reported By: Ester Gondwe
ELCM ACTING COORDINATOR FOR DIAKONIA

GREAT ACHIEVEMENT IN LAKESHORE DEANERY

Soon after the Deanery was established the Dean started visiting Parishes within the Deanery and has managed to cover all the places. During his visitation, he teaches about worship, the objectives of his tour are to teach how the Congregation can give their offerings and not to differentiate between worship and offerings, he also emphasizes that when you give to the Lord is part of the worshiping God. After finishing the visitation it has been discovered that the offerings collected every month from every Parish shot up. To visit the Deanery was part of encouragement to the congregants. Because of a means of the transport that has been provided to the Deanery the transportation has been easy to reach out Parishes. When going to the Parish choirs, church elders and other members of different Parishes within the deanery used to accompany the Dean and these groups are playing greater roles like getting experience which they don't have in their parishes and sharing ideas. The Dean and the whole Deanery are very thankful to the Lord Bishop Bvumbwe's encouragement. The main challenges are that most Parishes do not send 20% to the Deanery; funds collected from Parishes are not enough to run the Deanery programs.

Reported By: Dean Makawa (Rev)
LAKESHORE DEANERY

ACHIEVEMENT IN MZUZU DEANARY

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi is one of the Churches that preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and bring hope to the people of this Country. It is true to everybody that human being not only need spiritual guidance but also physical. The church assists a man in both body and soul. In order to fulfill this ELCM through its development arm has decided to re – open ELDS office in Mzuzu Deanery Centre on 1st February 2007 and the important thing is that Board Chairman Bishop DR. J.P Bvumbwe visited the staff members in Nkhata Bay and Luvwere where there were a special request from chief in Luvwere area to be helped in sanitation, food security and also tree planting. It is the hope of many people in Mzuzu Deanery that the membership will grow fast and people will continue growing healthy both spiritually and physically. The other achievement is women group of Mzuzu Congregation as they have managed to have a sister Congregation in Chilumba, and they women of Mzuzu Parish managed to visit Chilumba Congregation on 5th – 6th January 2007. The aim was to learn from each other, pray together, sing together and exchange gifts. It is expected that sometime in July 2007 the Mzuzu congregation will receive 20 women from Chilumba Parish for the same reasons. Now Mzuzu Deanery is waiting to invite Chintheche Congregation, Rumphi boma Congregation and Chinguluwe Congregation. This will be in April 2007 when the Lord Bishop will dedicate two village chapels to God. In addition to that after the Dean working hand in hand with Rev Mwalukunga of Luvwere Parish in preparation, they have moulded eleven thousand bricks with an aim of constructing the parsonage at Luvwere Parish centre because at the moment the pastor is renting a house, which is very expensive. Youth in Mzuzu Deanery are playing a very big role in moulding bricks; the work will start soon after rainy season.

Reported By: Dean Fungo
DEAN FOR MZUZU DEANERY

ELCM OFFERS SKILLS TRAINING TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi operates skill training program to assist young people within the local community to further their education by going to different Colleges. This program offers financial assistance to enable the young people to do different courses. The program offers courses including Accounting, Computer engineering, Secretariat, Administration, Rural and Community Development to mention a few. Candidates are chosen based on financial and need academic excellence. There were ten students received assistance in the year 2006 seven were boys and three girls. Since this program started a number of young people are employed in different organization and companies others are doing self employed activities. The Church through this program has contributed in development of this country. These young people who have completed their course and get employed are now able to lead a standard life of living and being able to assist their dependants. Those doing self employed business are able to employ other people. The importance of skills training is constantly on the rise at this time of rapid technological development in Malawi. The quality as well as quantity of education and training is crucially important to this country as it strives to maintain its economy growth and overall viability. An investment in skills training is therefore an investment in the future of the nation.

Reported By: Maurice Kanthiti
ELCM BURSARY OFFICER

ELCM EMBARKS ON SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi will soon start feeding her schools with assistance from General Mills Company in America. The Beans was spilt when the Lord Bishop Bvumbwe had a working holiday in America where he had a chance of highlighting the education situation in Malawi especially in the ELCM funded Schools. To start the ball rolling, the delegates being led by Diana Kaufmann paid a visit to Malawi ELCM headquarters and other parts of the Country. During their visit a number of ELCM Schools such as Mtakataka and Mponya in Monkey Bay, Rukulu and Kabale in Karonga and Fundo and Madisi in Dowa were visited. The delegates namely Diana Kaufmann - Companion Coordinator, Karalyn Littlefield – Food Scientist and Sherrie Schellhass – Vice President. During their visits the delegates have donated a number of balls, books, pens etc. In his remarks the leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi the Lord Bishop Bvumbwe thanked the delegates for their interest in ELCM. He emphasizes that due to the HIV / AIDS in Malawi the absenteeism rate has increased as the pupils have food for themselves because most coming from child headed families since they have lost their parents to HIV / AIDS. The Lord Bishop said that the feeding Program is milestone in the ELCM since the program will help retain pupils to in Schools hence improved basic education quality.

Reported By: Patrick Mwanyongo
ELCM ASSISTANT INFORMATION OFFICER

ELCM CONTINUES TO WATER ITS CONGREGANTS

The ELCM through the water and sanitation desk will continue to provide water to its Congregants and the community as a whole. It is the aim of the Church to contribute towards increasing the number of people having access to safe drinking water. During the previous season there was an official opening and dedication to God of Matsimbe Shallow Well by the Lord Bishop Bvumbwe of the ELCM and Bishop Berg of the North West Synod of Wisconsin in America. The shallow well was constructed with funding from the North West Synod of Wisconsin ELCA. It is expected that a number of Shallow Wells will be dedicated this coming season as the water desk has also constructed a shallow well at Chamasowa and has already excavated three shallow wells at Chintheche, Msambanyama and Mkhota Parishes. Although the program is going on well a number of challenges have been encountered and the major are; Resources due to limited resources such as financial resources, the Church is providing people with shallow wells but some places cannot accommodate shallow wells geologically. funds for the Church to facilitate the construction of deep wells (borehole) in places that cannot accommodate Shallow Wells; Community participation is one of the major challenges which causes the work to delay hence the project consume more funds. Most community prefers concentrating to their dairy activities rather than development chores. The Water and Sanitation Desk is pleading to all key players in this project, such as parish Pastors, Evangelists, Parish Workers, Church elders to join hands in encouraging their Congregants and communities to participate fully in development activities such as the Shallow Well Projects so that the Desk can achieve the vision of the Church leadership the Lord Bishop Bvumbwe of having clean water at every feeding centre in all Parishes. John 4: vs. 10

Reported By: Leonard Alton Misozo
WATER AND SANITATION DESK

BISHOP' S PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAM IS BORN IN ELCM

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi is one of the blessed Churches in Malawi, when you talk of singing groups especially at the Lilongwe Cathedral where Bishop stays. Since the Church was established in Malawi in early 1980' s, Choirs and Bands have been born in different Congregations of ELCM, including Lilongwe. As we are talking now, more than seven groups have been established and offer spiritual songs every Sunday at the Cathedral. Namely, Youth Choir A, Youth Choir B, Cathedral Choir, Kuunika Band, Brass Band, ELAPAC Band and Sunday School Choir. Recently we have been hearing of Bishop' s Praise Team that has born in church with the aim of assisting their respective groups and the Bishop when visiting different Congregations. The Bishops has been dreaming of establishing Praise and Worship Team in order to help him in his mission work. It was last year when he proposed to have Praise and worship team to assist with liturgy praise and worship but also to accompany him on his mission outreach visits. To let the other groups to participate in this group we took on from each group, some of the members who are in the group are; Mrs. Madinga, Amai Bishop, Amai Busa Phiri, Amai Buasa Mphalasa, Rev. Phiri, Rev. Mphalasa, Innocent Kaphinde, Innocent Zimba, Christopher Vinkhumbo, Tinkhani Mvula, Ireen Tsatawe, Chikondi Nyirong and Brenda Mazengera. The Lord Bishop Bvumbwe patron of the group, Mama Bishop is a Matron of the group. The group was introduced to the Church on 17th February 2007 where the Bishop dedicates the group to God and the group started their performance on the same day. Lastly the group is thanking the Congregation for the encouragement.

By Innocent Kaphinde

ASSISTANT COORDINATOR FOR MUSIC, LITURGY & WORSHIP

ELCM IS PUTTING ITS EFFORT ON TEACHING GIRLS THROUGH SEMINARS

If you stand outside the Church you can hear girls shouting and laughing in side what is this? Cant be a serious thing going on. Although there is much fun there is a very serious scenario inside. All in all what is it what we called Girls Seminar one of the activities being carried out by the ELCM through youth department. At the moment 150 girls have been empowered with assertiveness skills for self esteem. Annika Ovander Assistant Youth Coordinator has been conducting such seminars. These seminars have been taking place since 2004 in different parishes of ELCM such as Nambuma, Matsimbe, Mponela, Nkhotakota, Balaka and among others. The targeted girls are those who are not married and are aged between 13 and 20. The challenge that the Girls are facing is early marriages that resulted into early pregnancies and early mother hold. This is due to poverty. However the Girls mother the young at teen age when their bodies and minds are not ready matured. The seminars that are being conducted in the parishes will help the Pastor who among other things are being involved in identifying girls for the training. Also the parish workers and other female Co- workers are directly involved in facilitating workshops. To make the workshops participatory order girls are involved in the translation of the workshop materials from English to Chichewa, Tumbuka or Tonga as it is the case in Nkhata Bay. The youth exchange program has also positive impact in the girl's seminars since those who are involved in the program (exchange) to either USA or Sweden have received good experience in leadership and have practiced speaking English for several months. Apart from playing games in the workshops for physical fitness like HIV & AIDS preventions, good husbands' selection, and taking part in decision-making, Bible scripts are being discussed in the seminars. Girls are also encouraged in education for instance the std 3 to 5 drop out are encouraged to go back to school

to start new life and minor hand craft are being facilitated through out the workshop. Being a girls and a young woman in Malawian society is very difficult because you work in the garden, care for the young one and maybe a girl can become a leader of the family at early age hence can get early marriage to have a bread winner. The seminars have good outcome since the girls are now able to have their dreams come true. Many girls dream of having nice and good hobbies especially those that are well educated and have a job. Many girls are very much aware of the difficulties they are facing in their daily lives and have a wish of changing their situation. Annika and those who help are really caring those girls and wish them all the best and good lives.

Reported By: Annika Ovander
ELCM ASSISTANT YOUTH COORDINATOR

BIBLE REFLECTION

How do we understand the word discipleship?

Jesus said to His disciples follow me, that is in John 1: 43. Jesus speaks a number of times about the cost of following in Him. In Luke 14: 27, He says “anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple”. In simple terms, Jesus is telling us to put him first in our lives, and let nothing come between us. He is also telling us to account the cost, to ask ourselves, whether we are prepared to make all our resources available in total commitment to Him. Jesus Christ wants us to let go of our personal ambition and claims to fame and fortune. He wants us to surrender our rights to everything, even human relationship, in the right of our relationship with Him. He may as well choose to give us some, or all of these things in His plan and in His time, or He may not, but He wants to have that place of choice and Lordship in our lives. We may find it hard to understand what taking up our cross is all about. The idea may seem to be tiresome and weighty. Some may even feel as though they are carrying a cross, because of the difficult of their circumstances. The principle of Jesus taking up His cross was not the burden of it, but the willingness. He laid aside everything else, facing His Father’s will. He could say to his Father, not my will, but yours be done. Discipleship is always based on an attitude of heart and mind, and the willingness and obedience which follows. Jesus never forces us into relationship with Him; it is entirely optional. We need to consider our position with Him, and the depth of commitment we are prepared to make. We as Christians we have to give good examples and to follow the steps which Jesus Christ was teaching when He was in this earth it is our responsibilities to take part in teaching the word of God to the people who have not yet received Jesus as their Lord and Savior, it is an identity built on a set of universal values in which Christianity played a role in moulding them, which gives it a role that is not only historical but also foundational.

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