



## Paul and Lesley Evans

### Christmas News 2021

A Year for Family and Friends!

We are reaching the end of the year again and want to take this opportunity to send you our sincere Christmas Greetings.

Christmas prompts us to reflect on the year and remember our family and friends with thankfulness for God's blessings.

We trust you are in good health and spirit, despite the problems and difficulties of uncertainty and restrictions of the Covid pandemic. Thankfully, we have kept well and been able to get out and about a little more and meet up with Jonathan and Jenny, David and Liz (Lesley's brother and his wife) and friends.



Visits in the UK have been mainly to celebrate significant milestones and special occasions. It has been a joy to catch up with folk after what feels like a very long time. Social media has helped some times, but it just doesn't match the personal contact!

#### *Here are a few of the year's highlights:*

In June, a young couple, Lydia and Russell, spent an evening with us to ply us with questions about Zimbabwe. They were going there for a mission trip of 3 months, based at Karanga Mission Hospital. This is where Jonathan had his first medical 'work experience' when he was 16. His gory experience and response certainly confirmed his ability to more than cope with surgery, and strengthened the sense of his vocation. On their return they came again and shared what had happened and brought greetings from our many friends there. Although content in the UK, we still miss Zimbabwe, despite its many challenges, and especially our friends and colleagues there.

In July, we met up with Jon and Jenny in Cheshire for Sunday lunch together. This was the first time for at least 12 months.

In August we enjoyed 3 days with David and Liz in South Yorkshire, but also took the opportunity to visit John and Ann Simkins and Bob and Judy Chamberlain in Otley. Many miles may have separated us over the years but deep friendships remain strong. The following week, on our 52<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary, Martin and Marian Williams stayed with us. It was 3 days of memories from our Exeter – Walsall – and Malawi days together. If laughter is a medicine, we enjoyed an overdose!

In September, we were able to meet up with Jill and Charles Walker near Whitchurch as they returned to their home in Scotland. It was a brief, but enjoyable occasion. Jill was a church friend of Paul's in their teens and Charles is the editor and despatcher of our newsletters.

Also, in September, we made a day-return trip to a very peaceful farming village, Cardington in Shropshire. We went there to scatter the ashes of Janet Griffiths, Lesley's aunt. She requested this because that was her childhood home. It was a good opportunity to also catch up with Alwyn, Lesley's uncle, and the family. In late September Jon and Jenny were able to spend a weekend with us here in Bidston. We exchanged Christmas, anniversary and birthday presents saved from last year, and celebrated Jon's 39<sup>th</sup> Birthday. We also hope to see them again this coming New Year.

At the beginning of October, we were in Walsall, mainly to take part in the Centenary Celebrations of Hebron Gospel Hall in Tipton. It also gave us the opportunity to meet up with close friends there. Hebron is the church that, at 15 years of age, Paul first accepted Christ and committed his life to serving God. The church were very instrumental in bringing a godly influence on him from an early age through Sunday School. It was so good to catch up with friends there and moving to hear about the church's beginnings and history. For Paul, it was the original place where he learnt of Christ and his salvation and Bible-based principles for his later service, ministry and mission work.

Later in the month, our friends from Walsall Fellowship days, Dr John and Helen Gilbert came for a couple of days – for what turned out to be another time of walking down Memory Lane. It was a very encouraging time together.

November was a month for more travel and celebrating birthdays with family and friends. Jessica, the daughter of Lesley's nephew, Eddie, held a large party in Mirfield to celebrate her 18<sup>th</sup>. Jon and Jenny came too (Jon's her godfather) and we all stayed overnight in a monastery B&B. It was very quiet! The buildings and grounds were magnificent. Then, straight down to Walsall again for 3 days before heading home. On the last Sunday of the month we joined

with Janet, a very special friend we originally met in Malawi, in Haworth, Bronte-Country, for her son's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Chris and Jonathan were close childhood friends in Malawi, in fact, he was like a second son. He is a very proud father to twin boys. Unfortunately, Jon couldn't make the birthday meal. We were snowed in overnight, but were secure and cosy in the Old White Lion Hotel. Thankfully, the gritters were out early morning and we were able to travel home, as planned.



*Jessica's 18th birthday and the bearded dragon*



*Chris, his wife Cat and twins, Freddie and Charlie*



*The Old White Lion Hotel*

## Family News

**Lesley** - is now heading for 75 on Christmas Eve. She has been quite engaged in providing hospitality to distant and nearby friends. New nearby friends are Andy and Jackie. They bought our previous house in Broadheath Avenue, Bidston. The deal must have been good and honest! Jackie walks regularly with Lesley – it's a slow walk because Jackie brings a bag with her and picks up litter en-route. Lesley also re-joined her old walking group, 'Wirral Nomads', and enjoyed rambling around (talking as well as walking) the Wirral, Cheshire, and parts of North Wales - such as the Clwyd foothills of Snowdon. She claims it helps her health and fitness!



*A few of the Wirral Nomads*

**Jon and Jenny:** Jon has been extremely busy in Nottingham, trying to catch up with treatment and surgery of patients who have been delayed because of Covid. Being a consultant has not seen any lessening of his work load, but rather an increase with long hours and complicated operations. Jenny has also been busy working from home and travelling to London 2 or 3 days a week. The demands seem to be increasing on her too. Both are fitness conscious and involved in running half marathons and Park runs. Jon continues to play rugby for Lichfield, when he can. As much as he still enjoys playing, he claims it hurts more and takes longer to recover – and the black eyes and bruises don't help his patients confidence until he explains the causes. Golf is now a newish means of relaxation from his work exertions – or, as some say, is it rather a way to ruin a pleasant walk in the countryside! It does, at least, give him opportunity to spend some off-duty time with his medical colleagues.



*Frozen Allotment*

**Paul:** Now 76, soon to be 77, Paul continues to remain clear from his lung cancer and is generally keeping well. The allotment continues to be a beneficial outdoor gym and recreation for him, despite the recent high winds, rain and frosts. At least, his shed wasn't uprooted this year! Although he has retired from leadership responsibilities at the Aintree Church, he continues to assist as desired or when available. Recently, a request came from the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAOM) for him to produce and publish teaching manuals and booklets for helping church pastors and leaders. He has agreed and has begun to re-gather his teaching materials and add new perceptions. He may be retired from leadership, but not service!

We both continue to support mission work as we can. Makomberero in Zimbabwe is one that we highly recommend. Their mission is to give support to bright but deprived GCE pupils to gain a good quality education by bringing them to Harare. They use our old home to accommodate and care for them while they attend schools that provide scholarships. Makomberero have a number of videos on YouTube showing their work and the students. Look for Makomberero Zimbabwe. Past students are now in universities abroad, or in vocations back in Zimbabwe as doctors, engineers, teachers and researchers etc. Watch the videos and you'll also get a drone view of our previous home!

We also maintain contact with the CMC Training Team in Zimbabwe, who continue the training programme initiated by Paul. Our interest in Ameva Bible College also continues, as with other churches and individuals. The Yellow Bus Educational Project receives support, as does EAOM in Malawi, to help its teaching, training and evangelistic programmes.

We continue to seek to serve God, as opportunities arise, and we are thankful to Him for His faithfulness and provision. We feel so underserving of His grace and favour. Age has not dimmed our love for Him, nor our passion to explain to others how wonderful it is to know Christ and our Heavenly Father.

**The good news** we heard over 50 years ago about Christ and the significance of His birth, death and resurrection so transformed our lives, attitudes and purpose that we were stabilised and motivated to live to please Him. We certainly have no regrets!

We trust we will all remember this Christmas that there is no real Christmas without Christ and that we all need his Stable Influence as we face yet another year of uncertainty. We trust you will have a Happy and Blessed Christmas!

## Paul and Lesley Evans



*A Makomberero Christmas Celebration*

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