

2008 Peacemaking Offering

God at Work among the People of God



*I*n Malawi and South Africa, as across Africa, people feel the impact of HIV and AIDS. The challenges of dealing with the pandemic are enormous. As African Christians respond, they know that they are not alone. In the words of the Rev. Lecton Kaluah of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, “God is at work among the people of God.”

In February and March 2008, the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, in cooperation with the International AIDS Ministry and the Presbyterian

AIDS Network, facilitated a travel/study seminar in South Africa and Malawi. Ranging from young adult to retiree, the ten participants from seven presbyteries wanted to learn firsthand about the effects of HIV/AIDS and how PC(USA) partner churches are responding to the pandemic. They also wanted to discern ways to become more involved personally and to inspire other U.S. Presbyterians to action.

The participants witnessed God’s people in Africa caring for those who are infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS, and encouraging practices and behaviors that lessen their spread.





They saw

- Partner denominations who establish HIV/AIDS policies
- PC(USA) mission personnel who provide assistance
- Congregations who break the silence and address fear and stigma by speaking about HIV/AIDS each Sunday during worship
- Drama troupes and musical groups organized to provide community education
- Counseling programs and HIV/AIDS support groups
- Community-based child care centers for vulnerable children
- Church members who plant gardens to grow nutritious food in their churchyards
- Income-generating projects, especially those creating a sustainable income for women
- Volunteers trained to provide home-based care to community members who are chronically ill and dying

At the Kapaza Presbyterian Church, the travel/study team accompanied home-based care volunteers on home visits. Their small groups carried simple crosses, made from ribbon and paper by work colleagues of one participant, to give to those they visited. These gifts were reminders of God's grace in Christ who brings us hope and frees us to love one another.

Through your gifts to the Peacemaking Offering, you join the people of God at work in your own communities and around the world. Please give generously.



Mission Interpretation
General Assembly Council
100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202-1396



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