

## **LUBUTO TWINNING VISIT**

A year ago, Alison Boyes and I went to Lubuto United Church of Zambia to celebrate the twinning between the Zambian congregation and the congregations of Dunscore and Moniaive. Alison had been on the twinning trip ten years earlier. The idea came about after a meeting between Rev Christine Sime and a Zambian minister in Edinburgh (Rev Kasanga).

Lubuto church in Ndola has 2,400 members on paper and they regularly have 900 at a service. They have about seven choirs who lead the services with beautiful music. At the moment they are in lockdown like us and Rev Dr Simukonda is leading services on Facebook. When they say 'the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit' they clap three times. They also pray out loud together, which is very moving.

There are about 200 children in the Sunday School who meet in different classes in the grounds and in the school building (paid for by a twinning benefactor from Scotland). There are also strong Boys' and Girls' Brigade companies. The Boys' Brigade band use instruments that we sent over. There is a constant stream of people going to fetch water from the borehole provided by Moniaive and Dunscore congregations.

The Men's and Women's Fellowships stand out because of their red and white uniforms. They have a strict membership code, including no drinking because alcoholism is a problem in Zambia. The Fellowships carry out a lot of community work.

As part of the twinning celebrations on Easter Day a plaque was unveiled. It would be good to have plaques put up in the Scottish churches. About half an hour was taken up with taking selfies.

We also signed a commitment to the twinning's continuance for the next ten years.

It was often said to us that 'the twinning is a very good thing'. We have much to learn from each other for example the joy and exuberance of worship in Lubuto and the sense of community in Dunscore and Moniaive.

The twinning has led to many personal relationships over the years characterised by genuine love and affection. It would be good to strengthen these ties and to include more people in these relationships so that all the congregations feel really involved.

Looking to the future, perhaps there can be another visit from members of the Lubuto congregation to Dunscore and Moniaive, perhaps in 2021, when a Faithshare grant may be available.

Alison Robertson

April 2020.