



## SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Many of you will be aware by now of “St. Magnus Secondary School” being run by our Church partners in Malawi. With less than 10% of children in Malawi’s rural areas completing secondary education (figures from UNICEF) there is a real desire to see this sector better funded. It’s to this end that our Malawian partners have launched “the St Magnus Secondary School Bursary Scheme”, an initiative aimed at securing access to education for vulnerable but academically promising youngsters. To achieve this they’ve produced a thoroughly detailed, costed and thought-through document, of which copies will be gladly sent to anyone on request. The bursary scheme lists the following main objectives:

- **Access to Education:** Support students from financially vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds to access and complete secondary education through transparent selection and reporting systems.
- **Academic Excellence:** Encourage learners to strive for high academic performance by linking bursary support to merit-based renewal criteria.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Promote gender equity by ensuring equal opportunities for girls and boys, while also including learners with disabilities or special educational needs.
- **Retention and Completion:** Reduce dropout rates and improve retention and completion of secondary education.
- **Community Development:** Invest in future leaders who will contribute positively to society and national development.
- **Rescue at-Risk Learners:** Support needy students who are either dropping out or at imminent risk of dropping out due to lack of school fees.

Set up and annual running costs are around £10,000 per year which covers support for approximately twenty students (through full or partial bursaries depending on assessed need), as well as management costs, including verification visits, documentation, record-keeping, monitoring, and donor reporting.

Thyolo Highlands Partnership Coordinator, Kelvin Matola, sums up the crucial potential of these developments:

*“Education remains the most powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering sustainable community development. The establishment of the St Magnus Secondary School Bursary Scheme represents a strategic investment, not only in individual learners, but also in their families, communities, and the nation at large ... Together, we can ensure that no child is left behind because of poverty.”*

### Monthly Giving

We’re delighted to now have several people giving regularly to the Partnership by a monthly standing order. This is hugely appreciated as regular income but also gives an opportunity for a bit of forward planning. If you would like to donate this way please get in touch with the contacts at the foot of the second page and we’ll be happy to pass on details. Any donation is always welcome and no amount is ever too low.

There is also a desire to develop some more links between schools in the Thyolo area and schools in Orkney. These twinnings are of huge benefit to all involved, exchanging information, not just about education, but about life and communities in two very different countries. They give great opportunities to link in with many curriculum subjects (eg. geography, history, RE, art, modern studies, music etc.) and even to consider the life-enriching experience of pupil exchanges. They have already proved very beneficial for those involved.

If you are able to encourage a local school (Primary, Junior High or Secondary) to consider this please do get in touch and we’ll be able to provide further information and to help facilitate this.

Our Malawian partners are particularly keen to develop such a link between the St. Magnus Secondary and an Orkney school.

## RECENT FUND TRANSFERS

since the last newsletter

**17/10/25**

£10,293.21 comprising:  
£6,000 private donation for school projects, £155 in other private donations, £4,138.21 in Gift Aid / tax reclamation.

**9/1/26**

£9,196.59 comprising:  
£4,300 from the Christmas Gift Appeal  
£445 of private donations  
£2,277.50 in Gift Aid / tax reclamation  
£2,174.09 from fundraising and special offerings (made up of £500 from Evie & Rendall, £50 from Papa Westray, £200 from Firth, £274 from Westray, £220 from South Ronaldsay & Burray, £400 from Hoy & Walls, £530.09 from Orphir & Stenness.

**Total transferred : £19,489.80**

## JIM WALLACE



There have been many moving and heartfelt tributes paid to Jim Wallace since his death on 29th January. Throughout both local and national media, many have praised Jim's many legal, political and indeed Church achievements, including his Eldership, choir membership at St. Magnus and his Moderatorial year in 2021/22. It should also be noted that he was a very strong and generous supporter of our Orkney-Malawi Partnership.

Jim said that his biggest regret as the Kirk's national Moderator was being unable to get to Malawi. The Moderator's itinerary is planned well in advance by others and Malawi was scheduled for that year. But Jim made a point of finding out about our partners in Thyolo and making sure that visits to several of the projects we've supported, as well as a chance to meet folk on the ground, would also be included. Typically, he wanted to be well briefed on what was happening, who the key movers were and what future priorities were. Unfortunately, a certain pandemic intervened, hugely affecting international travel and the trip had to be cancelled.

The Partnership committee in Orkney will continue to miss his warm and enthusiastic support. Our thoughts and prayers, like those of so many others, remain with Rosie, Helen, Clare and the wider family.

## MAKING MANSES

One of the priorities over the past few years has been the renovation or replacement of some very inadequate manses, many still suffering from devastating consequences of Cyclone Freddy, three years ago.

We're pleased to have been able to support this essential work for the Church in Makala, Mangunda, Chitsime, Bindula, Matumbo, Chimvu and Sakalawe (the first three being new builds and the other four being repairs).

Ministers and their families are now resident in all of them except Chitsime (pictured right), which is still under construction but they're all needing a number of important works completed. These include installation of ceilings, water tanks, boreholes and water pumps, perimeter fencing and painting. With most of the area having no access to mains electricity, there is also a desire to install some solar panels to support basic domestic appliances like a fridge and the ability to charge up laptops, phones etc. New build projects at Makwasa and Thekerani will begin when funding is available with suitable pieces of land already secured and waiting.



The Orkney-Malawi Partnership Committee currently comprises Sally Bartkowiak, Caroline Butterfield, Alison Dickie, June Freeth, Iain MacDonal, Catriona Matheson, Liz McVicar, Elma Moar and James Watson. For details about the Partnership Committee's work or how to donate to any project please speak to any of the above or contact Iain on [imacdonald@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:imacdonald@churchofscotland.org.uk) / 01857-677357.