

What a Gathering Place!



The Gathering Place. I remember there used to be a small restaurant by that name in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. That was decades ago. Perhaps it's still there. Maybe not. Regardless, it's a fitting name for a restaurant as the locals would, well, *gather*. Eat the special of the day. Drink endless cups of coffee. Chat, laugh, share the news and enjoy the stories and the company.

There's a gathering place here in Malawi, too. Many of them, in fact. And now there is one more. In a place called Salima. This particular gathering place is not a restaurant, but it is a place where you can get a drink any time of day or night.

It's a *borehole*. This borehole serves one thing and one thing only: WATER! (Hey, I just thought of something...maybe *THE BOREHOLE* would be a good name for a restaurant here in Malawi....they'd probably have to serve more than water, however, if they are going to make any money!) A borehole is simply another word for a *well*. Here they are usually equipped with a hand pump. The depth of the pipes depends a lot on the level of the water table as it is normally found in the dry season.

It's a gathering place.

Women and children come every day to pump water and carry it home. Often the queues are long and the crowds thick. Buckets and pails everywhere. But it's worth the wait because there's food to cook, clothes to wash and baths to take. If all these people had taps in their gardens or faucets in their homes, they wouldn't have to gather at the borehole. But they don't so they do.

Many community members go to this newly tapped borehole for water. But if it is up to the LCCA congregations like Holy Trinity, then they will go home with more. *Much* more. The Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) congregation called Holy Trinity in Salima applied to the WELS Committee on Aid and Relief (CA&R) for funds for a borehole.

CA&R granted it.

Water Access drilled it.

Holy Trinity dedicated it.

Many gather around it.

CA&R asked the pastor and congregation a question and they answered it this way...

9. Explain how the congregation plans to use this borehole to share the gospel with the people in the church and in the community.

If the congregation borehole planted it will be benefit for the community as the community has more challenge in good water. In so doing it will be share the gospel. Because it will be a new thing for the congregation to ask the community to be part of the borehole committee. As of now we have a borehole 3kms away which is at the church but they are selling water to the community which is a hinderance to share the gospel.

In Malawi, the ones who normally gather in numbers at the borehole every day are the women and children.

They have come for water, yes, but there's a whole lot more that goes on. It's a gathering place. It's a bee hive of activity and there's a buzz of conversation. News and lives and stories are shared.



This particular borehole has been placed right next to another gathering place: the church itself! Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

*Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Salima,
Malawi*

Holy Trinity currently has 164 baptized and 129 confirmed members and is being served by Pastor Patrick Magombo. What a gathering place! The building is strong, the size adequate, the location prime. But more importantly, the Gospel of Jesus is preached and the sacraments are administered!



Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Salima, Malawi

And now Pastor Magombo and Holy Trinity Congregation has a gathering of people from the community coming on their premises for water.

Every day.

Every day their water needs are met. And they will be back tomorrow. And the next day. And the next...

It's not only a good time for a drink of cool water, it's a great time for a prayer:

"Lord, we know that the gift of water is a precious thing. Forgive us for taking water for granted. Many don't have the easy access we do. Many don't have the convenience of clean water that comes straight into our homes. But you provide in various ways and even water from a borehole is a gift from your divine Hand. Thank you for moving the hearts of people who have donated offerings to CA&R. Many people in faraway countries are blessed because of it. Thousands in Malawi! Encourage the Holy Trinity congregation and Pastor to also reach out with the gospel as the people gather both inside and outside the church building. In Jesus' name. Amen."



Pastor and Mrs. Patrick Magombo

With the borehole water, the people will thirst again. (John 4:13).

With the living water of Jesus from the wells of salvation, they won't. (John 4:14).

In the presence of Jesus....

What a Gathering Place!

Your Malawi Mission Partner,
John Holtz

