

## **St Mary's Hampton Visit to Sao Paulo's Mandimba, Mozambique – October 2023**

**Background** St Mary's has enjoyed a partnership with Sao Paulo's since 2005, supporting each other through prayer and friendship. St Mary's has also funded several projects, the main one being educational support for 112 pupils and 2 FE students – the Good Seeds project, since 2006. Participation is for those in greatest need, regardless of faith, and supports 50% girls/ boys, sending positive messages to the community about the value of education for all. Other projects include healthcare and church buildings/provision of worship materials at Sao Paulo's and the increasing number of outlying congregations supported by the priest at Sao Paulo's. Several visits have been made, the last in 2018.

### **Visit**

Rev'd Ben Lovell, Ana Rita Baptista Baretto Smith and Fiona Rowett visited Mozambique from 16-26<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023.

Bp Lucas Mchema of Niassa sent Archdeacon Artur Suede to greet us and accompany us for much of our visit. Positive relationships were forged. Key meetings/activities included:

- worshipping with our friends at Sao Paulo's and with the Mother's Union
- meeting the District Governor of Mandimba. Meeting the Deputy Secretary for Education in Mandimba to discuss the Good Seeds project; he was happy with our proposals for data protection & consent for the Good Seeds beneficiaries
- Good Seeds Project monitoring: we visited both schools and met many of the sponsored students, their guardians and teachers. The project continues to run well and be held in high regard; improvements in communication were agreed. We met the 2 students training to be Medical Technicians, visited their Institute and met staff
- visiting the Diocesan capital Lichinga and all Sao Paulo's outlying congregations bar Mongola (which we visited last time) ie Mitande, Mark 18, Mponela, Massangulo; the latter is being/has been (some dispute!) transferred to Lichinga
- time with Bp Lucas in Lichinga learning about the wider picture
- meeting fellow believers, receiving generous hospitality (all meals except breakfast provided by local families) and listening to their needs. We left \$80 for the small community at Mitande to build a church shelter before the rains start and two small donations for health care
- The visit was incredible positive and successful.



PCC meeting with Archdeacon Artur Suede



The small Christian Community at Mitande (who now have a bamboo/tarpaulin church building in which to worship)

- **Other points to note**
- travel was via Ethiopia to Lilongwe in Malawi, stopping overnight in Malawi, crossing the border at Chiponde/Mandimba – min. 24 hours travel each way
- hiring a four-wheel drive car and driver in Malawi, supported travel and translation. The driver spoke English & Chichewa (Portuguese is not spoken in some of the congregations).
- in Lichinga, we were given accommodation and hospitality by Bp Lucas; in Mandimba we stayed at a local hotel for B&B
- a female Portuguese speaker (Rita) was invaluable, particularly in speaking to women
- conditions were tiring, with temperatures above 34 degrees and lengthy, uncomfortable road travel (although the tarmac road from Mandimba to Lichinga was amazing and reduced travel time significantly). We experienced the intense deluge of the first rains of the year.
- We had a rest day in Malawi on our return – expensive, but worth it.
- Visiting is costly in time (16 days inc. travel time) and money @ c£2,700 per person. St Mary's subsidises up to 50% of traveller's costs (100% of vicar's costs). Generous donations helped fund the trip
- Visa are increasingly complicated with some conflicting advice re type of visa needed. ALMA will explore further.
  
- **Benefits**
- Visits reinvigorate our friendship and commitment to each other, supporting focused prayer support. It also helps raise awareness and funds for projects. Thank you to ALMA for your support to our partnership and facilitating our projects.