

“Do not fear for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

Halloween might conjure up images of scary things like vampires or haunted houses or fun things like carving pumpkins, costumes and candy. Although Malawi does not celebrate Halloween, vampires are on everyone’s mind.

Rumors, originating from Mozambique, about blood sucking and the existence of vampires began circulating in the southern region of Malawi in September. Since then fears have risen and people lashed out. There have been many instances of angry mobs carrying out vigilante justice via stoning and burning of those suspected of being or harboring bloodsuckers. Due to the tense state of things in the southern region, many international organizations such as Peace Corps, US Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations, and the World Food Programme have pulled their employees and suspended their programs. At this time, the central region of Malawi, where Lutheran Mobile Clinic operates its four clinic sites has not been affected, but we remain on high alert.

Belief in witchcraft is widespread throughout Malawi and is deeply intertwined within their culture. While a majority of Malawians would call themselves Christians, they may still hold onto these beliefs of witchcraft and local traditions. The Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) has 136 churches, which seek to share the message of the gospel and our salvation through Jesus Christ. What a special time for us to be celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation throughout Malawi in the LCCA churches!

Clinic Administrator, Amanda Artz, and I, went to Mtima Woyera (Clean Heart) church at our Msambo clinic site that hosted the 500th celebration in the central region. Congregations throughout the central region all came together to join in worship and fellowship. We heard many choirs, both children and adults, raise their songs of praise. It was a very different experience than going to church in town. The service was outside; many people were sitting on the ground; those who lived in the surrounding area pumped water from the borehole nearby. Some passersby stopped to listen to the choirs. After pumping water, some even sat to continue listening to the church service. What an amazing opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those coming for their daily water. I pray in the southern regions where the fear of blood sucking and vampires is high, that the other churches had the same opportunity to witness to their communities, to help dispel the rumors, and to lift each other up in Christ.

Your Sister in Christ,
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