

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

ZIMBABWE VIGIL: Every Saturday in all weathers since October 2002, a group of Zimbabweans meet outside the Zimbabwean Embassy, London from 2 – 6pm to protest against gross violations of human rights by the current regime. The Vigil will continue until internationally monitored, free and fair elections are held in Zimbabwe. There are again mounting fears for Zimbabwe's currency and the Zimbabwe dollar is in real peril. The American economist Steve Hanke, who has been tracking the Zimbabwean economy for many years, said: 'The Zimbabwe dollar had depreciated by 93% since it was brought back into circulation two years ago. Zimbabwe's currency is in a death spiral. Now the corrupt government is threatening to suspend all businesses using black market exchange rates to price goods. I've seen this movie before. It has a tragic ending'. Fortunately, our donations are received in US dollars. Meanwhile for ArtPeace and ordinary Zimbabweans the nightmare is accelerating. Food prices are escalating because retailers are charging more in order to keep up with the cost of buying US dollars to import goods to restock their shelves. Many areas are crippled by electricity power cuts often lasting up to fourteen hours at a time three, four or five times a week.



COMMUNICATIONS: News from ArtPeace is scant nowadays partly due to a 30% increase in phone charges from Tel One, the country's telecommunications provider owned by the government and partly because most of their old mobiles have problems. However, the good news is that next week, Catherine from Bristol will deliver eight used Smart phones in reasonable condition; also, lots of Poundland reading spectacles – no expense spared! A big thank you to those who donated a used Smart phone as mobiles are our sole means of communication. However, another worrying black cloud has emerged. From November, WhatsApp will not work on certain old mobiles which could prove a major blow – there is always some problem or other!

READING: On Sunday 31st Oct., our Church service link becomes even closer when a video recording of Psalm 67 read by artist Mike Masedza (right) will be relayed to St Andrew's congregation. Although artists are back at their own Church, they so enjoy our different style of service.



RAIN: ArtPeace fields are ready, and they anxiously await the arrival of rain to sow maize seed.

FORTUNE SMILES ON HERBERT: Readers may recall that Herbert was brutally attacked. His mobile and some money were stolen. He has recovered well and tells me his luck has changed. His sculpture 'African Beer Drinker' (left) was bought by Beverley during a visit to the Southwark Cathedral shop. Beverley recently visited St Andrew's and often tunes into our Zoom service. She



is delighted with her buy which will soon adorn her home in Norway.

COMMISSION: Herbert has received more good news in the form of a commission from a Chinese Gold Mining concern in KweKwe. They want him to carve their company logo onto an enormous antimony rock (right). Despite all the artists' trials and



tribulations, very occasionally a golden nugget shines through. Some cheerful Christmas news for our friends' families is also in the pipeline but more on this next article. **Johnston Simpson**