

RECENT VISIT TO MASVINGO



During early June, three members of the Cathedral's Support group, Canon Dr Stephen Hance, Sister Joyce and Ruth Ashby, visited our link Diocese of Masvingo. They enjoyed a very warm welcome everywhere they went; Sister Joyce singled out the great hospitality shown as something particularly to be remembered - this in spite of the problems they have recently had through a prolonged period of drought and the generally uncertain financial state of the country. The three packed a lot into their short stay, visiting schools, churches, health centres and areas where self-sufficiency projects are under way. They were pleased to see much evidence of practical outcomes of our link with the Masvingo diocese.

Stephen Hance says that the opportunity to preach and work alongside the local clergy was for him the highlight of the visit. "As always on this trip I was so impressed by the clergy of Masvingo Diocese - their resilience, their joy in the Lord, their determination to serve their communities in the midst of such overwhelming pressures and challenges."

And the determined response to adversity impressed Ruth Ashby, too - "The resilience and resourcefulness of our brothers and sisters in Masvingo Diocese is remarkable, particularly in light of the political and economic hardships they face," she says. However she continues, "There are specific hardships such as the basic infrastructure in parishes and schools; the water supply, mains electricity, transport and shelter are sometimes inadequate or absent. There are broken down motorbikes, broken boreholes, window panes... and buildings are in desperate need of repair. The solution is often to replace rather than mend."



Diocesan primary schools have almost no funds for basic teaching and learning materials. Schools' only income is from fees, and around a mere 10% of parents can afford these.



Our recent support for the feeding programme during the drought meant that many children were able to attend school and, when there, concentrate better on their learning.

Prayer for Zimbabwe: God bless Zimbabwe, protect her children, transform her leaders, heal her communities and grant her peace. Amen



Ordained clergy have doubled in number over the last few years and the Mothers' Union are thriving and engaged in the community at all levels. Clergy are grateful for congregational growth in the diocese, for the fellowship of faithful parishioners, the mutual support of their colleagues and regular visits from Bishop Godfrey, with his vision and discipline.

FOR THE FUTURE

You may remember that in our previous newsletter we mentioned that local churches sometimes have no building and gave an example of one using a chicken shed (once the chickens are outside). This can impact on the growing Sunday Schools and the congregation generally. Churches take a while to be built, even when the land is available as the congregation have to gather funds to buy materials and then self-build with what they can afford – it's a gradual process, and consequently many church buildings are incomplete, without a roof or a concrete floor (see below). Other congregations need resources for the repair of dilapidated buildings. This may need to be our next focus for fund raising.



The two Daramombie schools and the Cathedral School and St Saviours and St Olaves in Southwark are keen to improve their links, and we want to encourage this in any way we can.

Southwark Cathedral's support, friendship and prayer for Masvingo diocese clearly means a lot to our brothers and sisters there. They ask us to continue to pray for them, particularly with another election and unrest on the horizon, as they in turn pray for us. They are a resilient and wonderful people in a beautiful country. Please pray particularly for Bishop Godfrey as he leads the clergy and supports the people of the diocese.

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