

Southwark Cathedral - Masvingo Link Group Terms of Reference*

Introduction

The group was founded at Southwark Cathedral in 2009, to create a link with Masvingo, the newly created (fifth) Anglican diocese in Zimbabwe. At that time, this large embryonic diocese lacked finance and infrastructure. Moreover, it was being persecuted by the deposed Bishop of Harare, Norbert Kunonga. This threat has passed - but has been replaced by serious, worsening, economic problems and rising uncertainty as to the political future. The link group has met regularly, around 6 times a year, since 2009. The group is chaired by Canon Wendy Robins.

Aims

The group's main purposes were, and remain: (a) to form and develop relations with the Bishop of Masvingo (Bishop Godfrey Tawonezvi), his clergy and laity, and to support them in their work; and (b), through sharing our understanding of the challenges they face, to promote engagement of the congregation of Southwark Cathedral, and where appropriate other organisations known to the Cathedral, with the community of this African diocese, for mutual benefit and in Christian solidarity.

Methods

- Being informed about the evolving political, social and economic situation in Zimbabwe and in Masvingo diocese.
- Providing financial support, through regular individual giving and *ad hoc* events at the Cathedral, for a range of projects. These are discussed with the Bishop and ultimately determined by him. At its founding, the group set itself the target of £10,000 pa. This has proved attainable. As a result the group has been able to support (for example) education, medical services, training and practical help for the clergy, water bore-holes and church building. During the Kunonga crisis, the group funded critical action in the courts.
- Encouraging and arranging visits: of Masvingo partners to Southwark, and of members of the link group to Masvingo (two so far, 2011 and 2014). Such visits strengthen relationships at a personal level and promote discussion of future plans and direction for the link group.
- Making the congregation in Southwark aware of Masvingo and its needs: for example, by newsletters, and in services and events in the Cathedral. Promoting collective and private prayer on behalf of the people of Masvingo.
- Brokering and supporting partnerships between schools, charities and other sources of expertise and counterparts in Masvingo diocese, as guided by the Bishop.
- Keeping in touch with the work of the (four) other Anglican groups linked with Zimbabwe dioceses, in meetings with link chairs three times a year, to share experience and to co-ordinate initiatives.
- Reporting regularly to Chapter.

SUMMARY: The benefits of this link are two-way: we in Southwark offer support; by their resilience, faith and joy in adversity, the clergy and people in Masvingo inspire us.

*Revised July 2016, and approved by Chapter, September/October 2016 (replacing August 2009 Terms of Reference)