

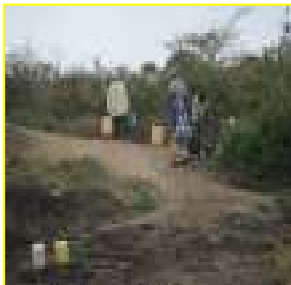
AN UPDATE ON ACTIVITY IN THE THIKA LINK

Thika Diocese has had a very busy time since we circulated the report after the Link Day held in May.

- Bishop Gideon, the first Bishop of Thika Diocese, retired in August with great celebration and thanksgiving. Archdeacon of Exeter Christopher and his wife Anne went to Thika for the occasion and stayed on for the consecration and enthronement of Bishop Julius two weeks later - also a splendid ceremony. They were joined by two separate couples representing the Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf for the two events and during their 3 weeks in Thika saw much to inspire them and encourage the links. They met with the Link Committee in Thika and discussed the difficulties of communication between linked parishes. The suggestion was made that a simple 'Terms of Reference' could be developed so that parishes can agree what the aims and expectations of a parish link should be.



- Sand dams or water pans? Archdeacon Christopher and Anne visited the area where the money raised by Exeter churches towards water conservation will be used. Consultations are going on to investigate what will be the best construction and where it should be. This is affected by the rock and soil formations, land ownership and other local issues and we await the outcome.



- Rev Rosie Austin, a curate from Fremington in North Devon, spent a month in Thika Diocese in October on a training placement. She was based at the Cathedral but was able to travel and visit many parishes and projects. We look forward to seeing how her research will help to grow the links between parishes in Kenya and Devon. She is putting together powerpoint presentations from the parishes she visited. Rosie says she and her ministry will never be the same after her experience in Thika and she was particularly affected by the faith, joy and generosity of the Christians there.



- In September teachers from St John's Academy, Kigoro, were able to return the visit made last May by teachers from their linked school in Pilton, Barnstaple. This has contributed a lot to the parish link. Rosie was also able to visit the school during her time in Thika.

- At the end of October the Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf hosted a tripartite gathering in Cyprus with delegates from Exeter, Thika and the Gulf Chaplaincies. This was a great time of making and renewing friendships, visiting places of pilgrimage and learning together. Exeter hopes to host a similar gathering in 2015.



- Another consignment of second hand books has been sent for the Diocesan library. These are mostly good quality theological books but books on other subjects are also very welcome.



- Erratic and unreliable rainfall is causing crop failure and hunger in Thika, especially in the lower altitude, semi-arid area. Umoja, Tearfund's Church and Community Mobilisation Process, is a programme which enables people to work their own way out of poverty by

finding sustainable solutions for themselves. The Devon-Thika Umoja Project has raised enough money for Tearfund to start the programme in partnership with Thika Diocese. Work has started on writing the proposal and recruiting trainers and they hope that training will begin very soon.

This is a very exciting start - but there is still a long way to go to raise enough money to run Umoja for three years and raise 10,000 people out of poverty for life in the poorest part of Thika Diocese. Brian and Jane would love the opportunity to talk about it to any church, school or other group - please get in touch with them on 01647 252519. It only takes £12 to change the world for one person for life.

After visiting an Umoja project in Uganda, a vicar said: 'For the first time in all my visits to Africa, I had come across something which has the capacity to change the face of communities and nations in a lasting way, which is entirely sustainable without any external aid and intervention.'

- As soon as there is a date for the installation of our new bishop we will be making plans to host representatives from Thika and Cyprus & the Gulf for the ceremonies. Watch out for an invitation to some kind of get-together for everyone interested in the Link and getting to know our companions in mission.

If you haven't received a copy of the revised Link Parish Pack on CD do get in touch.

For more information about the Link email thika.link@exeter.anglican.org or follow us on Facebook 'Tripartite Link'