

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK'S LENT CALL 2026



"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

Proverbs 22:6

Week 1: Introduction



'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.'

Proverbs 22:6

Bishop Christopher has called individuals, churches and schools to observe a prayerful, thoughtful and holy Lent for many years now. As part of this observance of Lent, he has asked that individuals and communities consider whether they can give to support various projects. More recently these projects have been in our Link Dioceses in Jerusalem and Zimbabwe.

The Diocese of Southwark has been linked with four of the five Dioceses in Zimbabwe for many years. These are Central Zimbabwe, Manicaland, Masvingo and Matabeleland. They are linked with the Croydon Episcopal Area, the Woolwich Episcopal Area, the Cathedral, and the Kingston Episcopal Area, respectively. The fifth Diocese in Zimbabwe, Harare,

is linked with the Diocese of Rochester. The Dioceses of Southwark and Rochester work together, where possible, to share news and information to make the Links as effective as they can. In this way we can hear as much as possible about the situation in the country as there is not often a great deal of media coverage of the country.

In 2025, the Lent Call focused on helping young people's mental health in our own diocese. Some of the initiatives we supported with the money raised by the individuals, parishes and schools in our diocese supported work in and through schools. So for 2026, we are continuing to seek to offer help to our young people through education and learning, using a variety of different means. In Zimbabwe we are called to support feeding programmes, as well as helping to build new schools and improving the buildings and facilities in older ones. Schools are important in all the dioceses in Zimbabwe. Each of them has Diocesan

Raising money to support projects that focus on the work of schools that will help benefit children and young people to flourish here in our diocese and in our link dioceses in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem.

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primary and secondary schools which they seek to run as effectively as possible in order to ensure that pupils have the best possible opportunities. Some of the secondary schools are boarding schools and where there are schools at Mission Stations – a hub focused on providing spiritual guidance, education, healthcare and aid – there are also orphanages, where children can be housed, fed and cared for as well as educated.

In the Diocese of Jerusalem, Archbishop Hosam and his team have asked us to focus on the Holy Land Institute for children who are deaf in Jordan. Here they offer a range of programmes for children who are hard of hearing, deaf or blind in the community, seeking to ensure that those who are in need of the special help that the Institute can offer are given the best possible assistance to succeed. The Institute also has outreach programmes for children living in refugee camps and elsewhere.

Finally, in the Diocese of Southwark, the Diocesan Board of Education is developing a programme entitled Love Your Neighbour, which is designed to be used throughout our diocesan schools. Over five weeks, the programme will give students in our schools the opportunity to think about what it means to be a neighbour in the classroom, school, community, church and wider world.

Please pray for this year's Lent Call projects each week, asking for God's blessing on the work of the churches and institutions in Zimbabwe and Jerusalem and for the Board of Education here in our diocese.

*Loving God,
We thank you for the gift of education,
Especially thanking you for all those who
teach and work in schools.
We pray that the schools and other
educational institutions
in Southwark, Jerusalem and Zimbabwe,
will bring hope to those they serve.
Give them hope and determination as they seek
to bring your love to all in their care.
Give them your generosity of spirit as they
work to bring others to see your love in all they do.
We ask this for Jesus' sake.
Amen.*

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