

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 2: Zimbabwe: The Diocese of Central Zimbabwe and Masvingo



St David's Sunrise School, a new Anglican diocese primary school.

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Each of the four dioceses we are linked to have primary and secondary schools within them. Some of the secondary schools are boarding schools. The Dioceses in Zimbabwe are asking for our help to build new schools and to maintain and update older ones. For many of the schools in our Link Dioceses, particularly those in more rural areas, access to water is an issue,

as is the distance that the pupils have to travel to get to the schools. Hunger is another real problem in the schools, which affects the pupils' ability to study.

The situation in Zimbabwe can be very difficult. Rainfall can be unpredictable and sparse, affecting agriculture and crops do not grow. In addition, the economic and political situations can make working to mitigate the effects of climate change and the shortage of water challenging.

The diocese works with schools to ensure that there is clean drinking water and food for children and they have developed feeding programmes based around the schools, so that boreholes are accessible and can be used by local people.

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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The lack of water in parts of the country means that it is not possible for people to grow enough food for themselves, their families and others. Drilling boreholes which are deep enough to find water is costly. Sadly, over the years the boreholes funded by our diocese through the support of other Lent Call projects are no longer deep enough to reach the water table – the groundwater that rises near the surface. The boreholes now need to be drilled deeper in order to provide clean water for those who need it for growing food and also for hygiene.

Matthias Mduba, the Development Officer in the Diocese of Masvingo, tells us that, "The drought which has hit Zimbabwe seriously in the last couple of years has affected livelihoods in much of the Diocese of Masvingo. This is especially the case in the Buhera District, which is more than 200km from the Diocesan Office in a region which has very low to no rainfall. Food aid is not issued there by the government and despite the fact that the rain has started falling in many parts of the country, the people of the Buhera region are still close to starvation because the previous growing season did not produce a good yield."

As a result of this, students in the six diocesan schools in Buhera are often unable to concentrate in class because of hunger which affects their learning. That's why the Diocese of Masvingo is asking the Bishop of Southwark's Lent Call in 2026 to help to fund a Supplementary Feeding Programme in the six schools in the Buhera area, three schools in the Chikomba District and also four schools in the Shurugwi District where children need extra food. Schools in the surrounding areas have limited access to water, and the diocese would also value help with this.

The cost of a feeding programme will cost around £460 per school which is £6,000 for all 13 schools.



Zambezi High School enjoying clean water after the installation of a water reticulation system.

The Diocese of Central Zimbabwe is also looking for help with their schools, with hopes to build more schools and grow those which have just begun to operate. The diocese is building a new school at St David, Sunrise. Currently the children are using the church – which is divided up during the week as four classrooms – but work has begun on a new school building with hopes to use this by the end of the year. In addition, the diocese has been able to begin work on a third block of classrooms at Holy Cross School and has roofed a new block at St Hugh Primary School, Mazinyo. Importantly, the diocese has been able to complete the water system at Zambezi High School so that there is access to clean domestic water.

As you travel through Lent considering once again what Jesus' life death and resurrection means to us all through thinking, praying and reading the Bible, we very much hope that you will feel able to give generously to the Lent Call and help to feed children in need in Zimbabwe schools.

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