

THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK'S LENT CALL 2025



“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 3: Zimbabwe: Matabeleland and Manicaland



St Mark's Mission, Filabusi baptism candidates and members of the community digging the foundations for the chapel.

The Diocese of Matabeleland is building a new school, St Cecilia's, at Lupane. The children in that area have to walk around 20 kilometres to get to school at present, which makes it stressful and challenging to get to school. The new school will mean that the children do not have to travel so far, reducing any impact on their learning, as they will be less tired when they arrive.

The Kingston Episcopal area is keen to support children's education in Zimbabwe and last year, The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough, the Bishop of Kingston and his Border Collie, Jem completed the Pennine Way which crosses some of England's wildest terrain, from Edale in the Peak District to Kirk Yetholm just over the Scottish border. Having raised more than £35,000, there is still more to do including housing for the teachers and for the Priest who will look after the church there. Children's education is hugely important and with

the local community already having access to the boreholes on the school grounds, it means that families do not have to go far to get clean, drinkable water.

It is not just in Lupane that the diocese has ambitious plans for schools. Work is happening in other places too. The diocese has recently taken over running St Christopher's Mission, Jambezi from the Hwange Rural District Council. The school there is an important part of the community and surrounding area, but many still have to walk a long way to get to it. So, this year, the diocese plans to transform the school into a boarding school so that vulnerable students will not have to walk such long distances. The hope is that the accommodation will be available to the students at a low cost and the diocese is asking for help towards building these. In addition, there are hopes to grow the school by expanding the school site to include those who want to study A Levels.

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.

The Bishop of Southwark's Lent Fund
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Two classroom blocks at the roofing stage, at St Cecilia Mission, Lupane.

These schools in the north of the diocese are part of the *Look North Initiative* – designed to help the low-income parts of the diocese in Lupane, Hwange and Binga. This work has meant that the south of the diocese hopes for these improvements too and work has now, begun on providing a school at St Mark's Mission in Filabusi. Currently, during the rainy season, students have limited access to the school that is available to them. Flooded rivers makes the road impassable to travel and so students in the community are forced to spend days away from school.

The Diocese of Manicaland is also hoping for help to improve their schools. Their goal is to improve the quality of education for their students. They would like to establish St Simon School in one of the urban areas where there is a need. In order to do this, they hope to develop five classroom blocks, an administration block and recreational facilities including a sport pavilion. It's a big task, but one that will help to provide education for people who need it most.

It is not only new schools with which the Diocese of Manicaland needs help. Many schools in the area need renovation and modernisation. As well as the buildings themselves the schools need help with internet connection and access to modern technology, including compute equipment.

Being able to interact through use of technology across the world is so important and gives students more opportunities to access learning resources and enhance computer literacy. Interactive smart boards in classrooms will also enhance education and learning. In the dioceses secondary schools there is a need for new laboratory equipment for science students for be better equipped for their exams.

Another priority is to support school leavers, who often find it hard to find jobs following their education and so the Diocese of Manicaland would like to provide facilities that can help them to be ready for future vocational opportunities.

The work that dioceses are doing in the schools is significant and costly. During this season, we hope that you will feel able to offer your generous support and help these projects in the Dioceses in Zimbabwe as they continue to seek to improve educational outcomes for young people.

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