

## UPDATE ON THE THIKA LINK SEPTEMBER 2017

### Bishop Julius in Exeter

We have just come to the end of the visit by Bishop Julius and Ven James Kamura to Exeter Diocese following their time at the clergy conference at the beginning of September. James is the Administrative Secretary (known to all as AS) and he is the bishop's right hand man. His purpose is to make the bishop succeed!



Over the four days they spent in Devon they had a great variety of experiences. In Plymouth they saw some of the projects of 'Transforming Plymouth Together' giving an insight into social problems and urban poverty. They saw a farm where people with addictions are helped to have their lives transformed by the love of Jesus, counselling and hard work. They met farmers selling their sheep at a market, shared a community lunch, and



visited a primary school in North Devon. They took part in worship at an ordination and in churches large and small and on 3 evenings met with members of linked parishes and other friends and supporters of Thika Diocese to eat together and share news and ideas.



As we discussed ways to build our relationship as partners in the work of God's kingdom, Bishop Julius gave the picture of the road to Emmaus - friends are walking together and Jesus comes and walks with them.

### Training Placement in Thika

In June Laura McAdam, an ordinand from Exmouth, spent a month in Thika on her training placement. Laura says:



*'I had such a wonderful and helpful month in Thika, I am so grateful for the opportunity. I was looked after so well. The Bishop and Ven James made sure I saw more than the day to day diocesan work and Rev Rachel gave me some eye opening and precious experiences in Kiganjo West Parish. I was grateful to get under the skin of the real day to day life of the church and be treated like a trainee and ordinand rather than a visitor, getting to grips with the challenges faced by individuals and parishes right up to the wider institution as it grows and plants churches. I hope that I can nurture the link*

*and remain involved as I train and return to Exeter diocese as a curate.'*

### Conservation Agriculture in Thungururu

In some areas of Kenya there was moderate rainfall last season but the drier parts of Thika Diocese had very inadequate rains. However there is good news from the Thungururu 'Farming God's Way' programme. Catherine Mwangi writes:

*'There is so much good news and progress from the project. In June I visited the project for monitoring and I met a group that was training on kitchen gardening, met some Project Management Committee members and did several home visits.*

*There was a notable change in the farmers in the programme, many of whom had increased the area under 'farming God's way' to an average of a quarter of an acre. Conventional farmers had no crop at all and, although army worm had attacked the crops, it was controlled in collaboration with the ministry of Agriculture.*



*Our Farming God's way farmers have had a harvest of maize, beans, lablab and green grams. There are a few farmers doing irrigation who have continued to reap big rewards.'*

You can see the latest update from Thungururu by following the link from <http://exeter.anglican.org/harvest-appeal/>

## **Umoja**

The Umoja (Church and Community Mobilisation) process is forging ahead with some amazing stories of transformation of individuals, churches and communities. The challenges of increasing urbanisation and changing community dynamics have led to facilitators developing the work in new directions. Small community self-help groups are proving to work better than trying to arrange large community meetings.



Working with children in a large urban congregation has led Leah, the passionate facilitator, to write a new Sunday school syllabus. The children's version of Umoja was first piloted with a year 9 class, made up of 60 children, but has since been shared even more widely. It resulted in a complete change of the children's behaviour in the way they take care of their environment. During previous vacation Bible clubs the children had been known to litter the church compound with milk packets and no amount of requests to stop would change this. Now they have discovered God's purposes for taking care of the Garden of Eden and they have all stopped littering!

Because of her natural liking for children's ministry Leah had the idea of writing a Sunday school manual that could be used by other children across the diocese. Leah has managed to sell a good number of copies. This earns her extra income and is resulting in other opportunities across the diocese to train Sunday school instructors. Leah explains: *'At one time I never thought that I had writing skills which would position me rightfully where I am in children's ministry. So far this talent has earned me KShs 70,000.'*

Read more exciting stories about Umoja in Thika by following the blog at <http://connected.tearfund.org/en/partners/thika/blog/>

## **What next?**

In July next year groups from Thika and from Cyprus & the Gulf will be coming to Exeter for a Tripartite meeting. They will be meeting for study and discussion as well as travelling to visit projects around the diocese.

Then, following up on the very successful visit of our guests from Thika last year, Bishop Julius has invited a group from linked parishes to make a visit to Thika in October 2018. The hospitality will be amazing and it will be an experience you will never forget. It will also give you the chance to make real friendships in your linked parish. It really does help the Link to come to life when we meet with our friends in person. We are all aware that communicating across 4,000 miles is not easy and a face to face visit can make all the difference. Make some plans and get in touch with Jane at [thika.link@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:thika.link@exeter.anglican.org) to put your name down!

## **For Prayer**

In August Kenya held a general election. The campaign period and the election day were peaceful but the results were disputed and this brought demonstrations in some parts of the country. Now new elections are planned for 17<sup>th</sup> October and we are asked to pray for a peaceful outcome.

Please pray that there is sufficient rainfall to support crops between October and December.

The schools have just opened for the final term of this year and we are asked to pray for the candidates taking their primary and secondary education examinations.

For more information on any aspect of the Thika Link, or to arrange a speaker, please contact [thika.link@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:thika.link@exeter.anglican.org)