



# Talking Tanzania

Winter/Spring 2025

## Welcome!

From the Venerable Cat Thatcher, Archdeacon of Pontefract



Welcome to 'Talking Tanzania', a newsletter for all those interested - or potentially interested - in the links between our diocese and the dioceses of Mara, Rorya and Tarime in Tanzania. It is my pleasure to be caretaking the Tanzania Link Committee, following the retirement of Bishop Tony Robinson, awhile we await the appointment of a new Bishop of Wakefield.

It's been a while since we communicated, but that doesn't mean the many individual parish links have gone quiet. Indeed, there's many a good project, much fundraising and many friendships still alive and well across our diocese - especially across the Episcopal areas of Huddersfield and Wakefield. You'll read in this newsletter of progress at Issenye School, support for a church plant on the edge of the Serengeti and, included in the newsletter from Mara Diocese, a very successful visit by a group of parishioners.



Bishop Moses at Halifax Minster, with the Rev'd Hilary Barber

Speaking of visits, we're hoping to arrange a visit to one, two or perhaps all three of our link dioceses next year. No details have been worked out yet, but if you're even possibly interested in joining, do let us know.

We had two wonderful visits last year by the bishops of two of our link dioceses. Bishop George Okoth from Mara came in October, followed by Bishop Moses Yamo from Rorya in November. Both bishops were able to meet people from some of their link parishes, as well as visiting various church projects and presiding at services in our dioceses, and there can be no doubt that the visits reinvigorated parishes in their commitment to the links. The Tanzanian

saying, "Bega kwa Bega" (Shoulder to Shoulder) is most definitely alive and well!

Please do continue to pray, both for your own links and for all the rich relationships across our dioceses.

In Christ,

Cat

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## *An update from Melina*

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*Melina Galibona, the link officer in the Mara Diocese, is working hard to ensure that parish and school links are strong, and that there's good contact from both ends. She's sent this update.*

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The Diocese of Mara is doing well, and we thank God for His help. I appreciate your continued support, especially in establishing communication with some parishes from Leeds. Although some have not yet responded to our emails, I believe that, step by step, we will make progress.

**Nyakiswa Parish**, linked with **Rastrick**, will soon have a new pastor because the previous one has been transferred to Buhemba Parish. This has slightly delayed the work of renovating the church, but it will resume once the new pastor arrives.

Funds from **Lightcliffe** have now arrived and will soon be used for **Nyamatare Parish** and **Nyamatare Primary School**. I also received communication from the parish linked to **Issenye**, and we have started corresponding.

**Nyasura Parish** has a new pastor, and I trust he will be proactive in building the relationship with **Elland** church. I had hoped that this year would focus on strengthening communication with our partner parishes, as it is disheartening to see the connections we've built over the years weaken. We are happy that parishes are supporting each other but without getting in touch that connection will perish.

**Wrenthorpe Parish**, linked to **Bwasi**, has supported the church to put in electricity last year.

**Mount Pellon** is active as we received funds last year and **Gesarya** were able to plaster the outside walls of the church.

Our schools are also doing well. We began the new academic year on January 13, 2025. Both **Issenye** and **Bunda Girls'** schools are performing well academically. In the form 2 results, Issenye ranked second in the Serengeti district. God has been good to Issenye despite many challenges, including a shortage of students, and yet it continues to excel academically. Let us keep praying for the school.

Bunda Girls' students also did well last year, securing first place in the form four examinations. Kindly pass on our heartfelt greetings to Peta Moffat for her great efforts in supporting Issenye School, especially in increasing student enrolment. This year, Issenye expects to have 165 students, up from 138 last year.

The **Safe House** is also doing well, we have 32 girls at the moment.

### *Let us know what you're supporting!*

A number of individuals and parishes are generously supporting parishes, schools and projects in our link dioceses, by paying in to the diocesan account.

However, it's not always clear what the money is for. If you or your parish are either about to become a regular giver, or are making a one-off donation, please email Sally Firth, the Treasurer to the Tanzanian link, on [salandtk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:salandtk@yahoo.co.uk) to clarify the fund to which the donation should be allocated.

## ***Safe House supports girls in their studies - but needs funds***

Some 32 girls are currently in the care of the Safe House in Mara Diocese, and all are thriving and pursuing their education.

The Safe House takes in girls fleeing female genital mutilation (FGM), a traditional practice which is still carried out despite being illegal in Tanzania.

Melina Galibona, Link Officer for the Diocese of Mara, reports that the House welcomed four new girls from villages in the Serengeti district, and an additional six from neighbouring Tarime district, who were subsequently transferred to facilities closer to home.

“We thank God for the opportunity to serve and rescue them from harmful cultural practices,” says Melina.



All 32 of the House residents are students. Six have begun secondary school this year, while the remaining 26 continue with their studies at primary and secondary level, meaning the Safe House must find the funds to pay for their school meals as well as notebooks, uniforms and other essentials to support their education.

One of the students, Maria, is now in her second year of high school as a boarding school student. Another, Bhoke Said, who has been with the Safe House for more than four years, completed primary school last year with excellent results and was selected to join a boarding secondary school in Bunda district.

The Safe House undertakes a number of projects to help raise funds to support the girls. Among these, a poultry project currently sees 21 hens and four roosters producing a tray of eggs every two days, which are sold to raise money. A kindergarten classroom has also been built which has already seen six children move on to primary school, and new students will enrol this year, again bringing in much needed funds to the Safe House.

Support for the Safe House from the Diocese of Leeds is an important part of the funding, and visits are also appreciated.

“We are deeply grateful to the kind-hearted individuals who continue to visit and support our girls,” says Melina. “In September, visitors from St Mary’s, Luddenden, spent time with the girls, providing food, mosquito nets, bed sheets, school supplies and jumpers. Their generosity brought immense joy and hope to the girls.”

### ***How you or your parish can support the Safe House:***

- ***Pray for its work***
- ***Donate - either through a one-off donation or a regular standing order.***

Melina continues, “Sometimes, the work we do may seem small, but God multiplies our efforts and blesses them in ways we cannot imagine. Many girls remember the Safe House as the place where they found hope, and we remain grateful to the Diocese of Leeds for their unwavering support in caring from these girls. We continue trusting God for everything will prosper.”

**For more information about the Safe House and how you can help, contact**

**Rebecca Cain: [rebeccaacain@outlook.com](mailto:rebeccaacain@outlook.com)**

**For bank details or a gift aid form, contact Sally Firth: [salandtk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:salandtk@yahoo.co.uk)**

## *St Mary's Horbury Junction supports church plant*

Supporting church plants is one of the ways many parishes in the Diocese of Leeds support their link parishes in Tanzania.

For more than 20 years, the parishioners of St Mary's, Horbury Junction have been supporting Issenye church at the little settlement on the edge of the Serengeti in Mara diocese. Issenye has been a thriving and active church, drawing many of its congregation from amongst the staff and pupils of nearby Issenye High School.

But some of the older members of the congregation are finding it increasingly difficult to climb the hill from the village, over a kilometre away, to attend church services. So a new church is being



built in the village of Nyaberekera - with funding going over from Horbury.

"We helped to fund the pastor's house, the church building, solar panels and a sound system for the original church" explains Jane Birkett of St Mary's, Horbury.

"We're now helping to provide bricks and other materials for the new church. Meanwhile, the congregation is meeting for services under a tree to give shade from the hot sun."

The bricks are being hand-made by the locals, as funds allow. A small toilet is already complete, but the church walls have yet to be started. The vicar of the new church is the Revd Gladius Chilo, supported by an evangelist, Robert, and a lay reader, Ezekiel.

St Mary's send an annual donation to their sister parish. They raise the money through specific fund-raisers, and at special services where the collection goes to the link parish. This year's Lent services and focus of prayer will be for Mara.

"I have visited Mara twice, and taken gifts of hymn books, an altar cloth, an altar cross from our church, and we've recently sent some reading glasses via another visitor. Meanwhile, Issenye Church has given us gifts including beautiful fabrics which have been made into a story mat for our Family Fun Church," adds Jane.

"The planting of a new church demonstrates to us that the church in Mara is growing, and through our link we can grow in confidence and joy, and feel rekindled and inspired in our faith journey, alongside our neighbours in Mara."



## *Issenye school punches above its weight*



Issenye secondary school has been supported by the Diocese of Leeds for more than 30 years. The school perches above the Serengeti plains in one of the poorest regions of the Diocese of Mara, purposely placed in this area of struggle to provide a beacon of Christian education and it does so remarkably. The school punches well above its weight, as evidenced by its national position: 286th out of 5526 Tanzanian schools. This position belies the local challenges, the greatest of which is the present roll of just 150 pupils.

“The school needs 200 pupils to be fully viable,” explained Peta Moffat, the Diocese of Leeds’ link officer for the school. “We’re currently providing a total of 12 scholarships for local children, thanks to the generous support of various individuals - but we’d like to increase this, to really ground the school and allow it to blossom.”

Pupils from the school are mostly drawn from four primary schools in local villages, which are some of the poorest in the region.

The scholarships require funding of around £40-£50 per month or £600 per year.

“We are grateful for any donation, large or small,” explains Peta. “A one-off donation is very acceptable, a monthly commitment for a period of time is wonderful.”



*A tree planting project is supported by a small tree nursery at Issenye. So far trees have been planted on campus as well as by the local primary and Issenye church. The trees are also used by the bee project to expand the planted area so that beehives can be protected from the Serengeti winds . Beehives are slung between trees (for protection from honey badgers) so more trees, more honey!*

*For more information on Issenye School, contact Peta Moffat: [peta.moffat@gmail.com](mailto:peta.moffat@gmail.com)  
To donate, or set up a standing order, contact Sally Firth: [salandtk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:salandtk@yahoo.co.uk)*

## *Two-way communication between Batley and Nyamongo*

For quite a number of years the United Benefice of Batley have been sending £300 four times a year to Kerende in Nyamongo deanery, Tarime Diocese, so they can provide porridge to the children in their pre-school nursery. In January, they received these pictures together with thanks for their continued support.



“As well as the porridge fund, every year since 2006, we’ve sent £1,000 to support 27 primary school children with the purchase of school uniforms, bags and stationery,” explains Tineke Bentley, who together with the parish link officer, Liz Benson,



looks after the link. “We’re delighted that quite a number of the children have gone on to secondary school. In the past couple of years, we’ve also supported Kerende with their church plant in Mrito, providing financial support with building a new church as they’ve outgrown their existing one!

“The link works because of regular communication both ways and visits in the past - also both ways!”

### *New Bishop for Tarime*

The Diocese of Tarime will welcome a new Bishop in March.

The Reverend John Msuma will be consecrated on March 11 in the cathedral - which is also the parish church of St Luke’s, Tarime and which has a thriving link with St Peter’s, Woolley.

Tarime is one of the three dioceses in Tanzania linked with the Diocese of Leeds.

Our prayers are with Revd John as he prepares for his consecration.

## ***Parish visit planned for 2026***

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A group visit to some or all of our Tanzanian link dioceses is being planned for 2026.

While no details are available yet, it is possible that a group may visit all three of our link dioceses: Mara, Tarime and Rorya.

If you are interested in receiving information and updates as plans develop, please email Rebecca Cain: [rebeccaacain@outlook.com](mailto:rebeccaacain@outlook.com)

## ***Useful links***

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**More information about our diocesan links with Tanzania:**

<https://leeds.anglican.org/who-we-are/our-partners/overseas-link/tanzania/>

**Latest newsletter from the Diocese of Mara:**

<https://actmaradocese.us13.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3884f626a3cc2fe37dd785a8e&id=5bff93049a&e=53ee8e4d9e>

*If you have updates, stories or photos about your parish link, please send them to Jane Evans: [janeevans89@gmail.com](mailto:janeevans89@gmail.com)*