

Rwanda Direct Newsletter

Spring 2021



After all the hard news - GOOD NEWS!

For many years we have been supporting Kigali Anglican Theological College (KATC) with grants to help them keep course prices more affordable for trainee pastors in Rwanda. We have prayed for new buildings to be built and the College to become viable for the long term future.

In the last three years money has at last been raised (principally we understand from the USA) and new buildings have gone up. We saw some of them last year including the nearly finished Chapel. and others have been built since then. The Principal, the Revd. Professor Viateur Ndikumana has worked hard to develop the Theology faculty to deliver degree level training, which all pastors will be required to have in a couple of years. Further plans are under way to develop Health and Education faculties.

All this work has paid off. First back in December, following a visit by the Minister of Education, the government gave authorisation for the College to grant degrees. This was fantastic news. Then, in mid-March, KATC became the East African Christian College (EACC) and was officially opened by Archbishop Mbanda of Rwanda, who has done so much in enabling the funds to be found. This is an enormous leap forward and a vital tool for the development of God's Church in Rwanda.

We have just heard from the Principal that the College has 256 students enrolled in the Theology faculty! 166 are Anglicans, 50 from the Pentecostal Church, 25 from the Salvation Army and 15 from other independent churches. These include 2 from Burundi and 2 from DR Congo. All have scholarships for tuition fees but they need to raise FRw50,000 (about £42) per month for food and lodging. This is currently extremely hard due to the Covid-19 restrictions as most dioceses and parishes have absolutely no money and are in debt.



Archbishop Mbanda opening EACC



Second brand new dormitory building

The degree level course they are following is similar to the previous diploma course; practical, applied, holistic theology, translated and delivered in English to meet government requirements. We have seen the impact of this course in the 4 dioceses that Rwanda Direct relates to. Now its impact can be spread across the nation. As Prof Viateur says, "It's really amazing, Praise the Lord!"

Archbishop Mbanda on left, Prof Viateur on right



Other news from Rwanda – challenging

Byumba – we have heard from Robert Tayebwa, Bishop Emmanuel’s Executive Secretary, who has shared this news- ‘We are writing to you again requesting for more prayers because within two days of Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th/April 2021, there was heavy rains with strong wind, lightning and thunder that destroyed people’s houses, took away their roofs, washed away many gardens and destroyed some of the churches which we think may affect people’s standards just as the previous April/May 2020 heavy rains.’



Roofless church after heavy winds, hail and rain

He also wrote – ‘The Diocese has been in hard times since the year began as it was in total bankruptcy however its time to give you a report and some testimonies on the funds you sent to be used by the Diocese. It really helped us a lot where some of the employees were given a small portion each so that it could sustain us to the following months.

On funds intended for Hannah Ministry, they (the volunteer leaders) were very much happy for the support because it came in the perfect time where children were almost approaching their holidays which they are in as of today, and commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi, a period that usually is always hard for them to feed the children and provide other flour for their home porridge. Out of the money, by the time I personally visited them, they had bought 20 sacks of Maize flour 25kgs each and 10 sacks of rice each with 25kgs to support the diet of the children.



Kigeme – Recently Bishop Assiel wrote:-

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace be with you!

Thank you so much for this message. We praise God so much for his protection during this difficult time of this global pandemic. But we still being grateful to you and your team because you have continued to stand on our side with prayers and different support. The Diocese still is working and facing these challenges brought by the Covid -19.

Up to now 53/334 churches of Kigeme Diocese have resumed the Sunday services which means 16% of all churches. You can imagine how we are struggling to pay Pastors and Diocesan staff and food supplies is so difficult because we do not have enough money to provide it. But we continue to encourage pastors and people to grow different crops.

Up to now we are not able to conduct the catechist training because of Covid -19 restrictions but if the situation happens to change to good, we will do it because it is very necessary. The money still safe in the diocesan account and we let you know when. (We sent £7000 to enable this. Ed)

May God continue to lead you, guide you and strengthen you in Rwanda Direct charity.

Bishop Assiel’



Committee News

We thought we should introduce our new Trustee. **Evariste Kanamugire** joined Rwanda Direct a few years ago when he and his family settled in Ipswich. He came to the prayer meeting regularly and became a member of the committee. Now we are delighted to have him as a Trustee for the charity. In Rwanda he did building work for Scripture Union and his wife Seraphine worked there and indeed helped to host Rwanda Direct visitors. They have three boys at school. Evariste has completed a degree in Social Work and is now a Social Worker. We praise God for bringing him and his family to Ipswich and enabling a Rwandan to be on our committee.



Jo Lacey joined the committee after a trip to Rwanda in 2018 with a small group from the North Blackwater group of parishes near Maldon in Essex. She was a senior NHS nurse and since leaving that post has developed a Parish Nursing service in those parishes, much of which has been delivered during these Covid times. Jo is married to Steve, Churchwarden at Tolleshunt Major, and they have three daughters and a very loveable spaniel Rosie.

Jo with Jean Baptiste and Eugenie during her visit to Scripture Union, Rwanda.

In Conclusion

Times are still very hard for the Church in Rwanda. The dioceses are financially broke; most staff are not receiving salaries. Rwanda Direct has been a real encouragement to our partners. We cannot solve all the issues, but God has allowed us the privilege of sharing what we can to enable His Church to stand through this devastating time. Our funds have all been given and we look to God for his way forward. In the meantime -

LET'S PRAY AND SEEK GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE IN RWANDA!

Newsletter Circulation – Spread the News Further!

If you know of others who may be interested in helping the Church in Rwanda, do share this Newsletter with them and suggest they get in contact with us as below.

All data is stored with due regard to GDPR legislation, so we will not share contact details with anyone without permission.

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