## Supporting children in Mzimvubu, South Africa

The whole world has suffered under the effects of Covid-19, and our link diocese of Mzimvubu is no exception. A recent report says that hunger and poverty have worsened due to the declining economy, and this has also exacerbated the effects of the virus. This has resulted in many deaths, leading to many families now being child-led. Many breadwinners have lost their jobs.

If vulnerable children are unable to attend school, they go hungry, as this is where they used to get food. On top of this, the area has recently suffered heavy storms, which destroy the food they are growing in the gardens, and make people in many areas difficult to reach.

We are pleased to report that with the arrival of the new Bishop Tsietsi and his new management team, we have been able to renew our link with this impoverished area, and have sent out small donations to help in September and again in November. They in turn have been able to revive the programme of support for orphans and vulnerable children through a newly formed Disaster Management Committee.

This committee has appointed Archdeaconry Coordinators to identify where the need is greatest and organise the distribution of food parcels, funded by the Diocese of Truro, particularly to grandparent- and child-headed families and orphans.

In November, they reported that the initial £3,000 was used to help 67 families across 4 Archdeaconries. In the Archdeaconry of Elundini, they say, “These are people who have no source of income. Some have lost their jobs, and are breadwinners. There is a problem of stock theft in the area. Some children and women are finding themselves homeless with no food and clothes, after their houses are burnt, and the heads of families killed.”

The Holy Cross Collegiate Archdeaconry is one of the worse underdeveloped arrears in the Province, with no access to most facilities. They say: “Before, it was a high sending area to the Mines and Sugar Cane Fields, but because of decline of the economy, they are all at home with no work. The levels of education are still low, which makes it difficult for the majority of the community to be employable. There are no factories around and no big industries. Poverty affects mainly the youth, who cannot support themselves because of unemployment.”

There remains a huge need, and although we have sent out a further £6,000 in November, the help that we can give and that they can organise is but a drop in the ocean. So I and the whole committee would like to thank our many donors who continue to give regularly to this project. We pray that the money we send will continue to be used to help the most needy and that the situation there will start to improve.

Please see the link for specific prayer requests for Mzimvubu. If you would like to give towards the aid we send to this impoverished region, please contact either Sheri Sturgess on sheri.sturgess@gmail.com or Agatha Hodges at finance@truro.anglican.org.

3 December 2020





