



An opportunity to connect

It's one of the great strengths of the Anglican Communion that it gives us a framework for building relationships around the world. That's exactly what our overseas diocesan partnerships are intended to do. We see them as extensions of our own parishes and communities, helping us to reach across borders and get to know our Christian brothers and sisters in Africa and Eastern Europe.

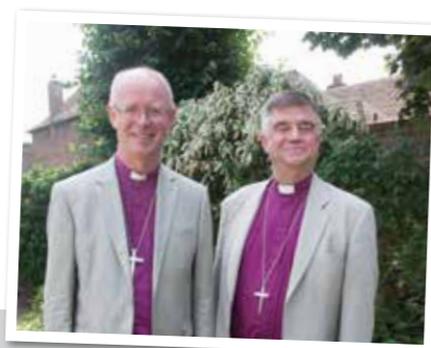
Forming friendships and identifying with the joys, hopes, needs and struggles of Christians in different circumstances to ours is always an enriching experience. It can also bring our own communities closer together: in some cases, an overseas link initiated by a local parish has stimulated wider interest with schools and others wanting to get involved.

And the benefit is two way. Our partner dioceses constantly tell us how much they value being part of a wider family, especially when times are tough.

We also find that relationships have a way of exploding into action. Again and again, links between parishes have led to visits and then to practical projects in the partner diocese. The great thing is, there's no blueprint for these cross-border relationships. Each will be different and each will develop in its own way.

We urge more parishes in Rochester Diocese to take this opportunity to form a link – to make friends overseas, to give and gain support and to widen their vision of what God is doing in his world. The results can be surprising!

James Langstaff, Bishop of Rochester
Brian Castle, Bishop of Tonbridge



Next steps

If your church, school or community group would like to set up a link with one of our partner dioceses – or if you'd simply like to know more – please contact:

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See also www.rochester.anglican.org
 under Mission / Overseas Links



Rochester and the wider world
 Forging links with partner dioceses
 in Africa and Eastern Europe

Diocese of
 Rochester

Friendships around the world

In recent years the Diocese of Rochester has set up links with the Anglican dioceses of Harare in Zimbabwe and Kondoa and Mpwapwa in Tanzania. It has a similar partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia.

Stretching from Kent to Eastern Europe to Southern and East Africa, our overseas diocesan partnerships are an affirmation that Christians from different cultures and backgrounds share a common heritage of faith and worship. They provide an opportunity for churches and communities in Rochester Diocese to form enriching relationships with Christians in other parts of the world.

Through the links with our partner dioceses, we aim to support and encourage each other in God's mission, to learn about each other's history and tradition, to share our spiritual and material resources and to build strong and lasting friendships to advance the Kingdom of God within our dioceses.

The links take many forms and are constantly evolving. Growing numbers of parishes in Rochester Diocese are establishing relationships with parishes in our partner dioceses. Schools, communities and groups such as choirs have also set up links. Visits are being exchanged and practical projects are under way as relationships translate into action.

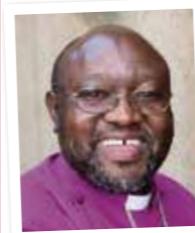
This leaflet explains how you, too, can become involved.



Our partner dioceses

Harare, Zimbabwe

Harare Diocese is the oldest of our overseas links. Chad Gandiya was appointed bishop in 2009 and faced fierce opposition from a previous bishop who, despite being rejected by the people, refused to step aside and barred most of Harare's congregations from their church buildings. Forced to meet under trees or in hired buildings, the church grew rapidly. After five difficult years, the issue was legally resolved in October 2012 when Bishop Chad and his people were finally free to use their buildings. The church in Harare continues to go from strength to strength.



“The link with Rochester enhances our sense of belonging to the wider family of the Anglican Communion. It means we don't walk, suffer or rejoice alone – our link companions journey with us.”
Chad Gandiya, Bishop of Harare

Kondoa, Tanzania

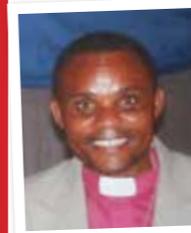
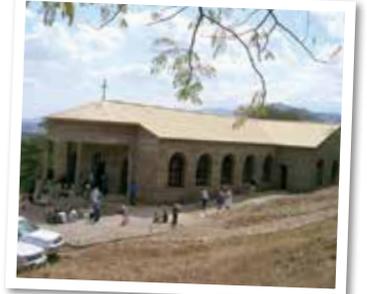
The Diocese of Kondoa was founded in 2001 and the present bishop, Given Gaula, was appointed in 2012. This semi-desert, Muslim-majority region faces problems of poverty and food shortages and Kondoa's Christians – just 5% of the population – need great sensitivity in their relationships with Muslim neighbours. In 2012, Bishop Given spent three weeks in England, inspiring churches to support his diocese by building long-term friendships. These have led to a variety of practical projects.



“The links provide mutual encouragement and inspiration, deepening our fellowship and friendship. This is strengthened by exchange visits and the prayerful sharing of gifts, both practical and spiritual. It's a two-way partnership to enhance the mission of the church.”
Given Gaula, Bishop of Kondoa

Mpwapwa, Tanzania

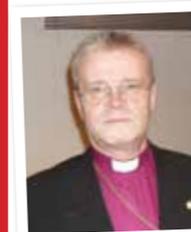
Larger than Wales and the site of Tanzania's first mission station, Mpwapwa Diocese was founded in 1991. A formal link with Rochester was agreed in 2004, since when Rochester Diocese has sponsored the building of a girls' secondary school. There are several active parish and schools links with visits from Rochester to Mpwapwa every year. The present bishop, Jacob Chimeledya, was appointed in 2008 and is now also Archbishop of Tanzania.



“From the links we've established so far, we have a clear understanding of what it means to be in partnership in God's mission. We would love to see more links at grassroots level between churches, schools and local communities.”
Jacob Chimeledya, Bishop of Mpwapwa & Archbishop of Tanzania

Estonia

In Estonia we're linked with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia. With memories of half a century of Soviet occupation just under the surface, Estonia is looking westwards and the Evangelical Lutheran Church deeply values its contacts with Rochester Diocese. A number of parishes have links and more are being planned. Conferences and choir festivals provide further opportunity for exchanges.



“Our partnership with Rochester gives us the opportunity to learn from one another and to share in fellowship and prayer at both parish and diocesan level. The exchange of people from our churches enriches our common witness as Christians.”
Andres Pöder, Archbishop of Estonia