



THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF TANZANIA DIOCESE OF MARA


NEWSLETTER

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VISION AND MISSION



VISION: Changing lives through the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Isa 61:1) to all people in Mara Diocese



MISSION: To model Jesus in holistically caring for the needs of humanity through evangelism and teaching, through compassion and justice and the environment, by caring for the creation.
(Matt 9:35; Lk 4:18-19; Gen 1:28)

PRAYER AND WORK

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PRAYER AND WORK

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MESSAGE FROM BISHOP



THE RT REV DR. GEORGE M OKOTH

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

As we approach the close of this year and celebrate the joyous season of Christmas, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you.

As we come to the close of this year, I take this opportunity to thank God for His abundant grace and faithfulness. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you who has been part of this journey.

To all our faithful newsletter readers, thank you for staying connected and informed about the work of God in our diocese. Your engagement and encouragement have been a source of strength.

To everyone who has prayed tirelessly for the Church, your prayers have been a vital foundation for the growth of our ministry and the transformation of lives. Thank you for standing with us in faith.

To those who have been involved in evangelism, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the year, I commend your dedication and passion. Your efforts have brought hope and salvation to many souls, and your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

As we celebrate the birth of Christ, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas filled with peace, joy, and love. May the coming year bring new blessings and opportunities to serve the Lord together.

May God's abundant grace be with you in 2025 and beyond!

With prayers and blessings,

+ George M Okoth



UK VISITS

BISHOP DR. GEORGE OKOTH

As I promised last time, I am happy to share with you about my amazing visit to the UK last October. By God's grace, The Rev Canon Dr. Eddie gave me and my wife Janet an invitation to visit his Parish, famous as St. John the Evangelist, Blackheath. (Blackheath means "black field", it's named after the plague that broke up in the area and claimed the lives of many people centuries back.) It is possible to kill two birds with one stone. I used my trip to St. John's Blackheath to visit the Diocese of Leeds, our long-time partners in the gospel, and Anglesey parish situated in the Cambridge area. I thought it would be wise to visit other Mission partners to encourage them in the journey of faith and to strengthen our partnership in general. However, the original purpose of the visit was to lead a "Weekend away Conference" Canon Eddie had organized for his Congregation. I must confess it was timely and well attended. As a teacher and a preacher this made me very happy to see such a big congregation ready to receive what this African bishop has come so far to share.

There was a good representation of all ages and genders, unlike Mara diocese where churches are packed by women, youth and children only and men going missing.

The topic was to be "Revived in Prayer". The venue was at High Leigh Christian Conference Center. So, all parishioners gathered at this Center for the weekend as I addressed them as their Guest Speaker. As I said before, I felt honored and thrilled by the large attendance. St. John's is not part of Leeds Diocese. The generosity of St. John's Blackheath is beyond description. They are the ones who paid for our Visa Application fees as well as our air tickets to the UK. They put us in Clarendon hotel for two days to recover from the long trip and to make final touches on my presentation. From the hotel I had the pleasure to stay with Mr. George and Barbara, his wife, in their beautiful house.



Attendance of the seminar I gave on Revival in prayer at St. John's Blackheath.

I stayed at St. John's visiting homes (Carolyn Alan Cartwright, David and Penny Halford, Edmund, Richard and Joanna Godden).

I met special groups (Youth Group, Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade). And schools, Pointers Lower and Pointers Upper schools. I stayed at St. John's Blackheath Parish for 11 days in total before we could move on.

We also give thanks to the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Bishop Anthony Poggo who invited us to his Office based at St. Andrew's House in London, UK. We were privileged to meet his staff members, including Revd. Canon Dr. Stephen Spencer (a long time supporter of Bunda Bible College) who donated a wireless microphone to our Cathedral St. John's in Musoma, Mara. We seek for more wireless microphones to boost our energetic youth choir members across the Diocese for the purpose of Evangelism. It was so difficult to navigate our way to St. Andrew's House, but thanks to the Revd. Canon Eddie who led through without losing heart.



potential partnership with Boys Brigade St. John's Blackheath UK

When I left St. John's the Evangelist Blackheath, I went to visit Anglesey parish in Cambridge. In fact, Revd. Canon Eddie drove us to Cambridge. Anglesey Parish is not part of the Leeds Diocese either. Now, under the navigation of Mwalimu Roger Bowen who taught at St. Phillip's Kongwa Dodoma for 15 years (he taught our retired Bishop Hilkiah Omino), we had an audience with the Priest in charge the Revd Canon Max Osborne and the Parishioners after we had been given a tour of 2 Church schools, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior Primary school.

Now, before we met Mara Group and discussed partnership and new strategies, we had lunch with Lucinda Collison. We stayed overnight with Mrs. Brenda Wilson, Churchwarden. And Mrs. Liz Butler drove us to Peterborough station to catch the train to Wakefield station.

On the third day at Anglesey, we took a train to Wakefield Diocese where the Ven Cat Thatcher received us at Wakefield Westgate train Station. She prepared us lunch in her house and then handed us over to Lay Reade Peter Prasadam, the husband to Bishop Smitha of Huddersfield area (part of Wakefield Diocese area), who later gave us a wonderful tour of Christ Church Academy. We visited Classrooms and met children and staff. I must confess that we saw high tech in those classrooms.



Visit to Christ Church Primary School potential link to ACT Mara primary school

While at the Diocese of Wakefield in the company of Ven Cat Thatcher and Bishop Smitha we visited St Stephen's Bowling, Bradford to see SHINE project, Halifax Minster where I led H/C service, Luddenden parish linked to Mmazame and gave a talk at Wakefield Cathedral concerning our partnership. The diocese of Leeds has maintained links with Mara and supporting missions in Mara through prayers, fundraising, and other practical support. Being compelled by the love of Christ, we celebrated our continuing friendship with God's people of Leeds. I was honored to meet all the Bishops under Leeds Diocese at Hollin House the Diocesan Headquarters, for a fellowship, Bishop Smitha, Bishop Toby, Bishop Anna and Bishop Nick, except Bishop Tony Robinson who just retired in August, 2024 was not there.



We spent a night with Bishop Nick and Linda Baines at their house and finally Janet gave a talk to Leeds Mothers Union. We were impressed by the good work Leeds Mothers Union are doing, actually, that is nothing less than supporting Ukraine war victims. We are ever thankful for the hospitality and happy laughter we had with Smitha, the Bishop of Huddersfield and her husband Lay reader Peter.

It was after our 4 days visit at Leeds Diocese that We took a train to Hereford to see my former Principal at St. Mark's Theological College and Retired Bishop of South West Diocese Njombe - Tanzania, Michael Westall and Mama Punitha Westall. We stayed for 2 days here before we could catch our flight back to Tanzania on the 30th of September.

It was very unfortunate that our trip back home was halted for 3 days due to 180 missiles Iran fired at Israel. The Middle East fight messed with many flights that had to be canceled abruptly. DUBAI was packed with many passengers around the world because of the unwise steps the Iranian government took against Israel. Good news is that we had an enjoyable time in Dubai and were well taken care of by the Emirates airlines.

I thought this could be short, but I found myself going on and on. In short, the Link between Leeds and Mara was originally signed by the first Bishop of Mara, the Late Gershon Oliver Nyaronga and David Hope of Wakefield back in 1988. And I learnt while in Leeds, that our Link is the second oldest link in the Anglican Communion (36 yrs old) after Malawi and Birmingham which is 50 years old.

We pray for Revd Canon Dr. Edward Scrase- Field and his beautiful family in their ministry at St. John's Blackheath. May God strengthen him as he supports the future of our children in Mara. And we give thanks for the bond of friendship that links our two dioceses (Leeds and Mara) together; for the support, encouragement, and prayers that continue to bind us; and for mutual enrichment through diversity of our cultural life.

News in Picture





CATHEDRAL DAY

A Brief History of the Construction of St John's Cathedral Musoma

In 1994, the Diocese of Mara made a decision to build a 1000-seat Cathedral Church. This idea was taken to our friendly parish in London, the parish of St. John's Blackheath, and Mara's need for our own cathedral was accepted. These friends happily accepted it under the leadership of Rev Jonathan Wilnest and in 1995 they formed a committee to build the Cathedral in Musoma. Initial building stages started including the drawings.

The church building has a total length of 45 meters and a width of 20 meters. Groundbreaking was done in 1996. The construction work has been carried out by local craftsmen here in Musoma under the supervision of Mr. Andrew Mclean (he was the development officer of the diocese). He had a career in architecture, assisting with expert John Opudo from Musoma.

✓ MEANING OF CATHEDRAL / MAIN CHURCH

The word Cathedral comes from the Latin word Cathedra, meaning Chair.

- The bishop's chair is always large.
- It signifies the authority of the Bishop
- It is a symbol of Mission
- It symbolises Diocesan unity

✓ THE PURPOSE OF CATHEDRAL.

It is to mold and urge all Christians who pray there to spread love to the hopeless, the sick, the wounded and the hurt. "Love". Love builds, love does not destroy. "To love" and "to serve." Cathedral is a place where heaven and earth meet. Cathedral is a place where people come to receive blessings and the Light of heaven and then spread it to the world rather than darkness.





✓ WHY WE CELEBRATE CATHEDRAL DAY EVERY YEAR

We celebrate so that we can live our faith, build our faith, to unite with our fellow Christians throughout the diocese and worship God, warm each other in our salvation, build relationships among ourselves, get to know each other better in our diocese, encourage each other in the journey of faith, to share various gifts such as singing, come and thank God for this gift of the largest building in the Diocese. A building that brings together all Christians. Each year hundreds of parishioners from across the diocese attend for a weekend of singing, celebrations and fellowship.

We thank God for all Christians and individuals and parishes who donated money, who gave their time, who gave their property so that this building could exist.

Thanking God for the technicians and engineer who supervised this building.

We cannot mention all their names so on behalf of the people of DM I humbly acknowledge these people for their great contribution.

Retired Bishop Hilkih Omino Deya

St John's Blackheath Church U.K

Lay Canon Graham McClure of Go Mad and his team

Technician the late Mr. Omollo

Compass Ross U.K

Leeds Diocese, formerly Wakefield Diocese.

May God bless them.

In October we celebrated this important day again and choirs from our parishes in the diocese came and served for three days. Various games were held including football and netball.

The main word of God that guided us was from the book of Mark 16:15-16.

News in Picture



Football teams.



Bishop Dr. George taking part in 200 meter race.



Chicken chase game.



A game of Running with the Bags.



Vicar general Canon Stephen Bwire participated in a game of running with an egg on a spoon.



ADVENTURES IN TANZANIA

By Claire Sapey

Fourteen Days in the Diocese of Mara

A team of five people from St Mary's Church in Luddenden, Keith, Clive, Barbara, Adam, and myself (Claire), travelled to St Mary's Church in Mmazame. We were welcomed at the airport by Melina, our link officer, who supported us throughout our visit. Mmazame is four hours north of the airport we flew into and is near Lake Victoria.

Our visit had several objectives.

- ✔ Firstly, to work with children who have special needs and disabilities.
- ✔ Secondly, was the design and construction of a termite-proof playground.
- ✔ Another focus was to undertake practical work in the church, creating a meeting room for the ladies and improving the vestry and vicar's home.
- ✔ We also wanted to help the church community become more self-sufficient by finishing the shop units and creating a sewing room.
- ✔ We also wanted to learn more about the Safe House, having visited briefly some years ago.

We adjusted well to the climate and quickly got to work becoming part of the community. Separating into two teams, Barbara and I worked with the children and were very privileged to spend time each day with a group of six parents and their children with a range of special needs and disabilities. Noella, Margaret, Amos, Songa, Anna, and Regina were amazing children. Over the days they began to interact with us.

Bubbles were a hit, as all the children enjoyed chasing and popping them. They also joined in with the action songs, and everyone laughed a lot. At the end of our time, the parents spoke very warmly about how happy their children had been. The children had told their friends and family about what they had been doing, and they had looked forward to coming. The parents also said being together had been good and they wanted to keep meeting each week, if possible.



A team Constructing the shelves

In addition to this group, we had anything from thirty to well over one hundred children from the village and local school attend daily.

We prepared different activities from making tambourines, shakers, and drums, to paper fish, fans, and puppets. We taught the children several songs in which they enthusiastically participated.

On the other team, Clive, Keith, and Adam worked with the local community to source the materials needed and then do the construction. It was astounding to see the speed, resourcefulness, and skill of the local workers such as the see-saw which was built in three days, using only a photo for guidance. Walls were plastered and painted, and benches, shelves, counters, and a cutting table were constructed. Sewing machines were fixed and additional cabling from the solar panel gave light to the shop. Once the playground equipment was delivered, the children watched and waited with anticipation until the concrete was set and they were given permission to try it out – which they certainly did, as did the visiting clergy on the final Sunday!

The community was so welcoming, and helpful, providing lunch for us every day.

We were able to organise and pay for appointments at the hospital for members of the church community who needed medical advice, thanks to the funds raised. For example, one little boy was diagnosed with Epilepsy and prescribed medication and a lady is having an operation to relieve the pain resulting from an amputation.



Children enjoying the playground

Clive, Barbara, and I were very privileged to visit the Safe House with Melina and Nguti. The stories we heard from the staff and girls as well as the very basic conditions were heartbreaking, yet we observed so much joyfulness, positivity and hope. What really struck me was the people.



Photo of Barbara and Claire with one of safe house child.



Clive, Barbara and Claire in a group photo with safe house dwellers and coordinator Mis Bethsheba.

When we arrived at the church they were singing, and we were greeted with such excitement and love. This continued throughout our time there. The church service was full of energy, with singing and dancing, and 'slightly' longer than our usual service in Luddenden, at two to three hours.

God was clearly such an intrinsic part of their lives, and this shone through everything they did. Beyond the village, we continued to see the friendliness and sense of togetherness in other places wherever we went. At the Safe House, the girls had given up some of their meals of maize and beans for us, which we could not accept, knowing that it was the last of the food and so the sacks of rice, beans and maize we had brought were very timely.

Overall, the experience has left me feeling so grateful for the basic things in life we take for granted.



Women enjoying the benches

Seeing how positive, joyful and welcoming the people that we met with were and their sense of community, even though they have so little, was for me, life changing!



A vicar enjoying the swing, Adam did a great Job here.

Returning for Celebrations in Bunda

Rev Canon Helen Hoskins

I arrived back in Bunda in time to join in some very special celebrations. The first one saw me in Moshi at the Mwenje University for the graduation of Caroline Makale on November 23. Caroline is one of our Bunda Girls Secondary School graduates graduating with Form 4 in 2018, then continuing with 2 years at High School before entering the university.

she graduated with a Bachelor in Education. I have known Caroline all her life as she is the daughter of my friend and colleague Rev Noadia Makale, who has taken over my position as Principal of the Girls Brigade Centre. I have many memories of Caroline as a young girl in the local Girls Brigade Company, and later teaching her Bible Knowledge at BGSS. It is very exciting to see our graduates now pursuing higher studies.



A Group photo with Caroline and her Mother Rev.Noadia Makale during graduation day at Mwenje University.

I arrived back in Bunda in time to join in the preparations for the graduation of 28 students from the one year course at The Girls Brigade Sewing and Handcraft Centre on November 28.

This was the 25th graduation at the centre since opening in 2010. The total number of students who have completed their studies now is 379. It was a privilege to be invited to be the Guest of Honour, alongside our Bishop Dr George Okoth. It was a joyful celebration with songs, speeches and presentations of certificates and prizes.



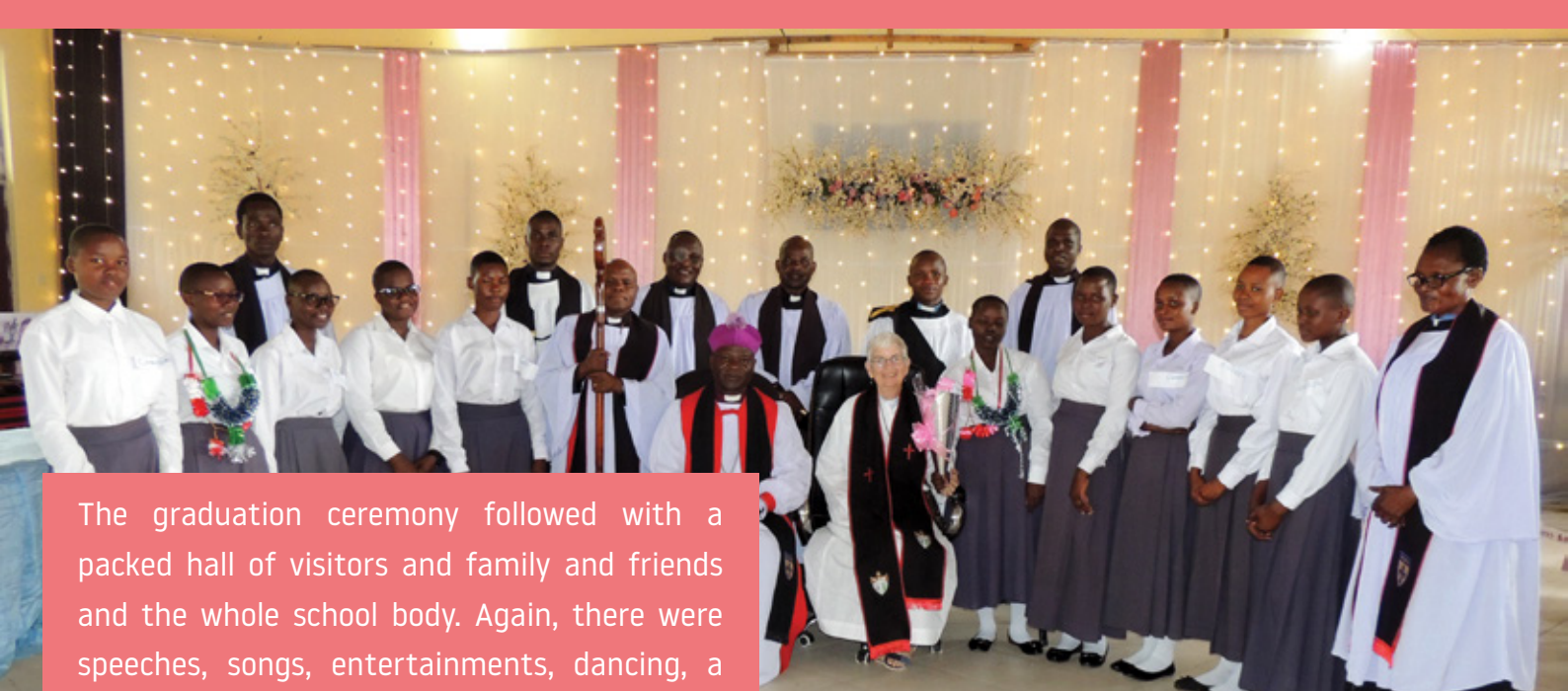
A group photo with GB graduates

A highlight was 19 of the graduates presented with their sewing machines to enable them to begin their sewing businesses. The remaining students will receive their sewing machines when they complete their contributions. Following the presentation, the graduates changed into the matching dresses they had made and celebrations continued with a wonderful cake in the shape of a sewing machine and shared by all, sodas, more singing and dancing. We pray for all our graduates that they may continue to grow in their faith and love of Jesus, that they may succeed in their sewing businesses, and that they will stand firm, make good life decisions and take their place in their families and communities and so contribute to our society and nation.



One of the graduates receiving a sewing machine

Two days later, yet another graduation this time the 8th graduation of the Bunda Girls Secondary School since its opening in 2014. Again, I had the privilege of being Guest of Honor alongside Bishop Dr George Okoth. The day began with a Holy Communion service and Confirmation for 10 of the BGSS students. Bishop George presided at the Holy Communion, Confirmation and gave the sermon in which he encouraged all the students to value their education and to grow in wisdom as the Bible teaches.



The graduation ceremony followed with a packed hall of visitors and family and friends and the whole school body. Again, there were speeches, songs, entertainments, dancing, a cake, presentations of certificates and awards to the 48 graduating students. It was a proud day for them and their families and the school. In my message to the graduates from 1 Thessalonians 4, I encouraged them to continue to live their lives in holiness, love for one another, to live quietly and to work hard, and prayed for them that they may grow in their faith in the Lord Jesus and committed them to his care. Unfortunately, I was not here for the first Standard 7 graduation of our Shalom Pre and Primary School. However, I was very happy to be present at another Shalom School celebration.

On December 6, Bishop Dr George Okoth, other diocesan leaders, SPPS staff, one kindergarten student, building contractor Mr Kulwa from Mrefu constructions and a team of his workers, gathered together at SPPS for a short service to break and bless the ground for the building to begin of a new duplex staff house which will house two more teachers on campus. It is exciting to see the building. project continue as it facilitates the school to grow and give more children an opportunity for an excellent education in a caring Christian environment

In 2025 we expect that some of our SPPS graduates will continue their education at BGSS (the girls) and at Isenye Secondary School (the boys).

We praise God for the blessings of these three institutions in Bunda the Girls Brigade Sewing and Handicraft Centre, the Bunda Girls Secondary School and the Shalom Pre and Primary School, and are proud of and pray for all our graduates.



Bishop Dr. George Okoth lead a Ground breaking at shalom primary school for the building of new duplex staff house.

I am thankful to God for allowing me to visit again and spend time sharing in the life and ministry of the ACT Mara Diocese



ACT ISENYE SECONDARY SCHOOL RENOVATION

By Headmaster Isseco

Isenye Secondary school is a private school owned by the Anglican Church of Tanzania, Diocese of Mara. It was constructed by the government in the 1960s as a primary school and established as a secondary school in 1990, having been transferred by the government to the church. Initially, it was flourishing with a student population of 500 in the late 1990's and early 2000's. The school has been supported financially by the Diocese of Wakefield/ Leeds in England. However, over the years, Isenye secondary school has faced numerous challenges that has contributed to the significant decline in the student enrolment, which currently stands at 138, with 10 teachers. Furthermore, the school suffers from poor infrastructure which requires upgrading to ensure it can compete with other private schools. Its classrooms, toilets, laboratories and dormitories are all in poor condition.

Despite the reduction in student population and deterioration of its facilities, the school continues to maintain a commendable academic record in the region, highlighting its potential to thrive with adequate support.



A school library with high level of wear and tear that does not bring stability to students learning.

In light of those challenges and future opportunities, Isenye secondary school urgently requires renovation and improvement to bridge the gap and restore its competitive edge.

The following list indicates the priority for renovations:

Activity	Budget	GBP	AUD
Library Construction	TSh46,440,550	GBP13,176	\$25,757
Girls Toilet	TSh20,836,225	GBP5,911	\$11,556
Classroom Renovations	TSh11,809,000	GBP3,350	\$6,550
Dormitory renovations (4)	TSh54,400,000	GBP15,434	\$30,172
Fencing girls dormitories (2)	TSh21,145,000	GBP5,999	\$11,728

TOTAL

TSh154,630,775

GBP43,870

\$85,763

Anglican Aid projects at Bunda Bible college



Rev. Canon Alpha Lugoley

“Let grace flow through generosity”

ACT Mara Bunda Bible College was established in 2010 in dilapidated buildings that were unfit for human habitation. Through various partners, the college has continued to modernise, especially in terms of infrastructure. It is an undeniable fact that Anglican Aid in Australia has contributed greatly to the development of this college.

Anglican Aid's funding on infrastructure has helped to completely change the image of the college. Buildings built with support from Anglican Aid include the Library Building, which is also used as the Principal's Office at the moment, three classroom buildings with a total of six classrooms and three teachers' offices. At the same time, Anglican Aid has enabled the college to build two dormitories for students to rest and study after classes.

A project to rehabilitate some old buildings and give them a new look, is work that is currently being undertaken. Major renovations of a men's dormitory roof which was leaking every time it rains, toilets and bathrooms with pipes blocked, walls which had cracks and the ceiling board which is very worn. The women's dormitory has also undergone renovation of the floor and installation of stable seats, improved toilets and new ceiling boards.

Additionally there was a great need for married students to have their spouses at the college. Anglican Aid heard that cry and now the construction of the Marrieds Hostel is ongoing and has reached 71 percent. On completion, it will house ten married couples and up to two children. The participation of Anglican Aid is especially divine in achieving the goal of the Anglican Diocese of Mara (and other dioceses in Tanzania) to prepare ministers in a good and attractive environment to be a motivation for them and to be a springboard for their personal development and the church as a whole. Previously the college was able to admit 30 students relying on local income and a few friends. But since Anglican invested in the admission of students, the college currently has 75 students, 7 teachers and 9 non-teaching staff..

Anglican Aid has continued to support the college with teaching and learning equipment such as 23 computers and reference books. Internet was connected in late 2023 and it is hoped that this can be extended from the library to classrooms and dormitories.

On behalf of Bishop Dr. George Meshack Okoth and the entire BBC community, we have to thank Anglican Aid for the great support and prayers you continue to pray for us. May God bless the work of your hands. In addition, we would like to assure you that we will continue to protect the value of the money you send for God's work here in Mara.



Bishop Dr. George Okoth, Archbishop of Sydney Kanishka Raffel and Bishop Musa yamo of Rorya Diocese inspecting water tank in new builded classroom at BBC.



Bishop Dr. George Okoth, Archbishop of Sydney Kanishka Raffel and Bishop Musa yamo of Rorya Diocese inspecting water tank in new builded classroom at BBC.



New builded studying pavillions



Domitories revonavation on progress



New builded morden classrooms



Married couple Hostel Construction on progress.

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