**Bishops' Lent Appeal 2021**

*(The red numbers refer to the Powerpoint presentation that goes with this talk. It is also available as a pre-recorded video presentation)*

[Pic 1]

During Lent we are thinking about our Link Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania and the gift that this link is to our own diocese. There is so much that we here in Suffolk can learn from them. [Pic 2] Kagera is a poor region of a poor country, and the majority of the population are subsistence farmers, living on less than £1 a day,[Pic 3] struggling with the effects of the climate emergency.[Pic 4] But in churches across the diocese there are 3 or 4 hour services every Sunday full of noise and dancing in packed churches, as people give praise to God for all that they have.

[Pic 5]Amid this poverty and hardship, Kagera Diocese is working hard to help people lift themselves out of poverty and achieve their vision of 'Life in its Fullness'. This year the Bishops' Lent Appeal gives us an opportunity to help in this work. [Pic 6]The theme of the appeal is 'Supporting key workers in Kagera', and we're focussing on three strands of work in particular.

[Pic 7]First is the Church and Community Mobilisation Process. CCMP is organised in Kagera by Thomas Shavu [Pic 8] and is about helping people realise their potential and develop their gifts, to improve the lives of individuals and communities. The process starts with Bible study to change peoples mindsets and prepare them for the practical training that will follow. [Pic 9] Many people think that to till the land is a curse, but CCMP teaches them that it is a blessing. They learn from Genesis of a God who has given them a world to cultivate and care for. [Pic 10] From Kings and the story of Elisha and the widow's oil they learn of a God who loves them and will multiply their efforts. [Pic11]Thomas says that CCMP opens people’s eyes to look around to see what they have and what they can do to help themselves. With your help we can continue to support Thomas and his team in their vital work, and bring lasting change to peoples' lives

[Pic12] The second strand of the Appeal is about the Diocesan hospital in Murgwanza. The medical care there is wonderful, but it makes us very thankful for our own NHS. [Pic13]We don’t have to pay 3 day’s income just to see a doctor, nor do our cleaning staff have to wash sheets by hand when there’s no money for electricity for the washing machines. Yet this hospital’s vision is to be a referral hospital with specialists, generating income so that the poorest can be helped more. [Pic14] At present the nearest referral hospital is a 5 hour journey away, over roads like this. Many of the sickest patients don't survive the trip. [Pic15] Dr Christian Ruzige, until recently clinical lead at Murgwanza, is undertaking a 3 year Masters course in Surgery. He's a local man with a real love for Kagera. He wrote, ‘Your donations will help the poor through my hands. With God’s help, hopefully there will be healing.’ Dr Christian needs our support to realise his gifts and help the hospital achieve its vision.

[Pic16]The third strand of the Appeal is helping priests lead their people out of poverty. Bishop Martin and Jutta took part in the ordination ceremony in Kagera in 2019. During the pandemic here we’ve seen churches working hard to care for their communities in all sorts of different ways. [Pic17] Priests in Kagera do much the same, leading their people towards the Diocesan vision. With teams of unpaid evangelists they farm land round their churches for food and as a resource for income for their parishes, planting maize, coffee or trees. [Pic18]They build new churches because the old ones are too small for their growing congregations.

In previous years we've supported priests with health insurance and it’s great that after this hand-up from us, Kagera Diocese has found a sustainable way of paying for it themselves. Through the Lent Appeal there are now two further opportunities for us to help priests in their work. [Pic19]Firstly, transport. The Diocese of Kagera is as large as ours yet most priests don’t have any transport. £850 would buy a motorbike to enable a priest to spend more time working and less time walking. Secondly, the government is now requiring local leaders to have formal qualifications. [Pic20] Kagera Christian Theological College (KCTC) is rising to the challenge by offering more courses for both priests and evangelists. But they need more teachers, more student bursaries and better facilities – [Pic21] more dormitories and classrooms, better toilets and kitchen. These hardworking young men and women need our support to help them realise their gifts and lead their communities.

[Pic]If you'd like to help support our brothers and sisters in Kagera, here's how to find out more.