

## A Celebration of the link between Blean Church and Madagascar

### The development of our link with Madagascar

The Canterbury Diocese has been in partnership with Madagascar for about 25 years. Eileen has been there 3 times as part of a diocesan team visit. Following Eileen's 3rd visit, Blean was invited to form a link with a parish in Madagascar. From 2007 and for the next 3 years we worked on building a relationship with each other, through correspondence, photographs and support through prayer. When we heard of the devastating effects of the cyclone in 2008, we sent aid to help people whose homes and livelihoods had been destroyed. In addition, we sent money for mosquito nets and made a contribution to the improvement of the church in Ambatondrazaka.

In 2011 Jim Appleyard and Sally Penfold went to the Revd. Olivier's parish to learn and hear from them how we might share their mission and their ministry. In response to their requests we have raised money to:

- train evangelists
- put electricity into a rural church
- Provide a solar panel for another rural church which had no source of electricity. This will also provide power for the school
- Buy materials to build a roof on a newly built church
- Obtain books to help Revd. Olivier improve his English

In addition, individual donations helped repair a church roof and purchase a motorbike for Revd. Olivier so that he could travel to his various rural churches.

Our link in Madagascar is primarily through the Revd. Olivier, whose parish includes St James in Ambatondrazaka, St Michaels in Ambohidava, St Pauls at Manakampahiny and the new church at Mahatsinjo. He also hopes to establish another one in Amboasary. Despite difficulties in communication (and misunderstandings at times), the link has flourished because we try to ground everything in prayer. We have developed a trust and respect between us.



Revd. Olivier on his way round his parish on the bike provided by a benefactor in Blean.



The Revd. Olivier with his wife.

In order to raise funds for our work, Madagascar lunches are held every 6-8 weeks in people's homes. Here, we enjoy fellowship, a meal, and hear the latest news about our joint ventures. Each person gives whatever they can afford to contribute to our projects.

As in most of Madagascar, the population in Revd Olivier's parish is very poor. Children have very little food, particularly protein, and infant mortality before the age of 5 is very high. Education is very limited, as is availability of any medical care. Cyclones frequently effect the area, destroying homes and crops.

## Ongoing projects which we support in Madagascar

At present, the ongoing projects we support are the feeding of Sunday school children and the building of a new church in Mahatsinjo. By buying the bricks that the local residents can use for construction

### Feeding Sunday School Children in St Michael Ambohidava

The Madagascar group and children from Herne Bay High School have raised money for this program. Rev Olivier has reported recently that it is going well. Since last October, the number of children coming to Sunday school has risen from 30 to 70. They receive lessons from the gospel and then a meal typically consisting of rice with vegetables and meat followed by banana and pineapple.



# Partnership Prayers

From Saints' Cosmus and Damian in the Blean England

Heavenly Father,  
 As we draw close to you in prayer,  
 Draw us ever closer to one another in love.  
 May we learn from one another.  
 May we encourage each other in the doing of your work.  
 Give us the grace to continue living in faith and walking in hope.  
 Bless and prosper our friendship,  
 For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

From St James in Ambatondrazaka and St. Paul's in Manakambahiny, Madagascar

- God, our heavenly Father  
 Blessed be your Holy Name For ever,  
 Through your Beloved Son  
 You give us a new commandment : love one another  
 We ask the Fellowship of your Holy Spirit,  
 So the link, between our parish,  
 becomes the evidence proof of your living love  
 Bless our link so it may bring the fruits of the development of your Church 's life.  
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Please look at the Madagascar noticeboard in the church for regular updates



Children enjoying a healthy meal at St Michaels



Service has to be held outdoors until the church is built



Laying foundations for new church in MAHATSINJO



Standing in the foundations of the new church



Where is Ambatondrazaka?

