

## **‘Please pray’ – Tree planting in Kenya’s Marsabit diocese**

Join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

*2 Corinthians 1:11*

The Diocese of Chelmsford has several overseas partnerships. One of them is with the Diocese of Marsabit in northern Kenya. About 1 million people live there, in a diocese whose area is the size of England.

Earlier this year, Bishop Qampicha of Marsabit was interviewed by Sandra Eldridge, Chelmsford diocese’s environmental officer, about the impact of climate change and deforestation, and what was being done about it. You can see the full interview on YouTube: [youtube.com/watch?v=kpnh9WJKWf8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpnh9WJKWf8).

The bishop explained how much their climate has changed in recent years. Droughts have become much more frequent and severe. Droughts used to come every 10 years, then every 5 years, now it’s every 2 years. In the most recent drought, water levels in the few remaining boreholes plummeted, the springs from the mountains all dried up, and 80% of the livestock died.

In a diocese where the vast majority of people are livestock farmers, the consequences have been devastating. People have been starving, with no food

and no water. And people have lost their livelihoods. They have resorted to cutting down trees in order to make a living. This has exacerbated an already serious problem of deforestation, which means that when it *does* rain there are extreme floods due to the lack of ground cover.

What can be done? The Green Anglican Movement throughout Kenya is encouraging a huge tree planting programme, with the ambition to plant 45 million trees by 2026. In Marsabit, the International Tree Foundation is implementing large scale tree planting projects in partnership with ‘Arable’, a grass-roots community-based organisation, working to improve food security and sustainable livelihoods. The projects are strategically designed to slow and prevent water catchment loss and environmental degradation. Farmers learn to integrate the growth of high value fruit trees while improving the productivity of the rest of their farmland.

There is also a particular focus on empowering women and girls, who play a major part in seed collection, nursery establishment, tree planting and aftercare. They benefit financially from growing high

value crops, and they learn how to use efficient cooking stoves and renewable wood sources so that they don't use indigenous trees for cooking.

As a result, the Marsabit tree planting programme has the potential to transform the future prospects for these agricultural communities, while protecting wildlife by reducing desertification and conserving water sources.

At the end of his interview, Bishop Qampicha was asked what, if anything, can people in the UK do to help the situation? He answered,

- to pray – because our lives are in God's hands;
- to support causes aimed at the good stewardship of God's creation, especially initiatives to bring back cover to the earth, and provide funding to enable visions to be realised.

If you would like to donate to support the work of the International Tree Foundation, you can do this through their website: [internationaltreefoundation.org](http://internationaltreefoundation.org). Might this be a good 'alternative' Christmas gift for family and friends this year?

And above all, let's pray. Pray regularly for the funding and implementation of the vital tree planting programme in our link diocese of Marsabit, and for its continued success in restoring the environment and improving people's lives.

*Roger McFarland*

*To find out more or to share your ideas on Eco Church please go to the website [www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church](http://www.allsaintsspringfield.org.uk/church-life/eco-church) or speak to one of the Eco Church Group – Roger McFarland, Nicky Morecroft, Chris McFarland, Ian Poston, Dave Gauld, Beth Cornish, Ann Salmon.*



## **This month's eco suggestions**

- Look for opportunities to **share cars** or use **public transport**
- Try to buy things which are **eco-friendly, ethically-produced, and fairly-traded**