

Evander



Our Twin Parish in South Africa

What you can do to help

Our twin parish - Christ the King, Evander, South Africa

Brentwood Diocese is twinned with the Diocese of Dundee in South Africa. Bishop Michael (now retired) of Dundee was born in Grays, Essex. The twinning was originally envisaged to be one of spiritual support and friendship but over the years it has taken on many different forms, including the twinning of parishes, schools etc.

Fr. Gerald Gostling (seen on the front cover with some of his parishioners), is Evander's Parish Priest. Fr. Gerald comes from the Brentwood diocese and his work in South Africa is itself part of the twinning exchange. Fr Gerald had stood in as parish priest at Our Lady of Compassion, while Fr John was on sabbatical, so the Parish asked to be twinned with the Parish of Christ the King, Evander to support his exchange work there.

Evander

Evander lies about 80 miles east of Johannesburg. It is a largely rural area although Secunda, next to Evander is a fast-growing town built around the huge Sasol factory. The main industries are gold and coal mining. There are extremes of first world development here including even a casino and extremes of poverty and deprivation.

The parish covers a huge poverty- and AIDS-stricken area. The people of Evander struggle with the basics of food, clothing, health-care and education. Estates that have sprung up around the township have no electricity

and only a few standpipes. The main roads are tarred but most side roads are rough dirt roads which become impassable for a car during the summer because of the rains.



Many schools do have well-equipped kitchens, but many do not with the cooking of midday meal for children and staff done on fires in the compound. For many, this is their only meal of the day.



In order to become men, the boys go to the Initiation School in the mountains for three months. Here the boys have returned and are dressed in the beautiful Ndebele colours and have their ceremonial spears and shields



The parish of Evander now has six churches: Christ the King, Holy Family, St Augustine's, Maria Consolata, Holy Trinity and St Michael's as well as a number of mission outstations. Two parishes in the Brentwood Diocese are supporting students for the priesthood in South Africa.



Our parish has been working with Father Gerald, for the last four years. Most of our communication is via post (both written and photographs); phone calls being very costly.

The Wednesday Group is very active in material support of Evander, with the making of woollen blankets, toddlers tee shirts and hats. Postage is paid for by fundraising activities and the "Pennies for Evander" collection at the back of the church – though Fr. Gerald is currently using the pennies to buy sewing machines to help his parishioners make their own clothes and also earn some money.

Parishioner Joan Hoadley (SW 599790) co-ordinates a good number of knitters in the Saffron Walden area – including the members of the Wednesday Group and a number of housebound parishioners. There are also groups in Upminster, Dunmow and East London contributing to the effort, from whom Joan collects knitted items.



Why do they need so many blankets?

Shacks made mainly of corrugated iron, tin and wood – perhaps lined with cardboard or newspaper – are very cold in the winter. They can be quite snug if there is a cooking fire or stove, but that is limited by the availability of fuel. Families keep warm by huddling together in bed or on the floor. There are hundreds of families with no electricity – so no electric heaters or electric blankets!

Donated blankets fulfil a great need especially for babies and young children. They are also used for burial.



So, what can you do to help?

Most importantly, please pray for the work of Fr. Gerald and the families of Evander whose lives are fragmented and difficult.

Pennies for Evander

Keep putting your spare change into the jar at Church and facilitate the buying of sewing machines so that Evander parishioners can earn money for themselves.

Sponsor a blanket

Why not sponsor the Wednesday Group to knit or crochet a whole blanket or just some squares?

20p a square : £7 a blanket

Donate wool

The group always need wool, double-knitting or baby wool. Just drop in the box in the porch.

Pay for postage costs

All the items that are produced need to be sent out to Evander, why not help with postage?

Currently a 2kg parcel costs approx. £12

Knit or crochet squares yourself

Squares need to be produced in double knitting wool and should be either 15cm x 15cm. Just bring them along to Church when they are ready.

Help would also be welcomed in sewing the many squares together.

Commission items for your family

We have a few expert knitters able to produce children's jumpers, matinee jackets etc to order. Just supply the wool, the pattern and a small commission. Similarly, there is an expert needlewoman in the Group. Please contact Mary Wheatley (SW 530861) in the first instance.

Join the Wednesday Group yourself

If you enjoy making things and like the idea of meeting up once a week for a cup of tea and a chat while you work in a good cause, then this is the group for you. Everyone is welcome!

All funds donated will be used to support Fr Gerald's work in Evander. As donations and sponsorship money are eligible for Gift Aid, please use the Parish Project Gift Aid envelopes and mark them 'Evander Postage' or 'Evander Blanket Sponsorship'. (Cheques payable to Our Lady of Compassion)