

**Without proper toilets and clean water, people are trapped in a vicious cycle:**

* They’re likely to become sick through sanitation-related diseases
* Illness means they cannot work or farm their land, so they earn less or grow less food
* Children often miss school, as they are sick or busy collecting water
* Girls often drop out of school altogether when they start their periods if there are no toilets or changing rooms.
* Parents have to pay for medicines or food, so they may fall into debt
* Women and girls risk being attacked or bitten by snakes as they go to the toilet in the open, especially if they have to go out at night

Water and sanitation projects enable families to build a toilet, have access to clean water, and to learn about handwashing and other hygiene principles. Toilet Twinning raises funds in support of Tearfund’s water and sanitation programme. For a £60 donation, they twin your loo with a family’s household latrine, in a country of your choosing. Your certificate includes a photo and GPS coordinates so you can look up your twin’s location online. Tearfund works through local church partners who are well-placed to serve local people, tend to know who is most in need and can implement culturally appropriate, cost-effective, sustainable development programmes.

The partners work with the whole community to set up local water and sanitation committees; programmes benefit people of all faiths, and none. Everyone in the community benefits as partners explain the link between sanitation and health, and encourage households to build toilets, have clean water, and learn about hygiene principles. This is especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic, and a ‘tap twinning’ initiative has just been launched to raise funds for specific public health programmes. Any funds remaining after toilet twinning will go towards tap twinning.

In Malawi, where over 62% of the people live below the poverty line, this programme can change lives. *‘Fourteen-year-old Ireen knows only too well that it’s hard to do well in school when you miss at least one week every month. AG Care is providing schools with toilets and changing rooms for girls. At Chikuluti primary school in Salima, girls now have a changing room with water, soap and a mirror – for use during their periods.* It’s so important that we overcome our inhibitions and taboos, including in the UK, and talk about issues surrounding periods. This happens monthly to about half of the world’s population for a significant proportion of their lives!

The story continues at toilettwinning.org*: “I had to repeat a year of school because of monthly absenteeism due to my periods”, says Ireen. But not any more. Now, she enjoys school, and she’s one of the top students in her class. “I was poorly performing before but now I can clean up and get back to class straight away. I have passed all my subjects,” she says, pointing proudly to the weekly published results in the corridor. Five months on from the building of the new block, the school’s matron Chifundo Chilala says the number of girls missing school had “drastically reduced”.*

Could you donate to help sponsor twinning all our church toilets, total cost £180? At St John’s we already twinned our new disabled toilet in the Parish Centre. We would like to twin the other two toilets in the centre and the one in the church, and this is part of the A Rocha Eco Church programme. It is also a great present idea and I have had it as a family Christmas present for two vicarage toilets. The certificate and photos of our toilet twins in Afghanistan and Malawi make me very happy every time I see them!

If you feel able to donate towards twinning of toilets at St John’s Ranmoor, please contact Claire at administrator@stohnsranmoor.co.uk

