

## The Sudans Day – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021

I was pleased to be able to attend a day organised by the Salisbury - Sudans Link. Key points from the Sudans Day organised by Salisbury Diocese on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Things that struck me included:

- During Lent, the Salisbury Diocese asked its parishes for donations to help the Sudans cope with the Covid crisis. People were very generous, and they raised £100 000. Half of this was given to South Sudan for awareness training, water containers, sanitiser and soap. However the Bishop of Sudan asked if their donation could be spent on food. He said 'we would rather die of Covid than starvation'.
- this highlights the current level of food instability in both countries. A significant factor in this is climate change. Over the past two years South Sudan has seen unprecedented flooding in states right across the country – normally flooding would be expected in just two states. Using the IPC classification system, which is a common global system for describing the severity of food insecurity and malnutrition, 6.3 million or 53% of the population of South Sudan are at level 3 or above. 50% of children under 5 years old are either stunted or wasted. Lakes State, which is where Wulu is, is identified as being in Phase 3.
- Agnes Oswaha, the Ambassador of South Sudan in London, told us about through the political situation since 2011 when South Sudan gained independence. It has been a rocky road - the current peace agreement is fragile but holding. As she took us through the different components of the peace agreement, the need to keep on board the 45 different political parties, the process for developing a constitution, the complexities of maintaining peace, and all amidst the devastation caused by floods, locusts and covid 19, we began to appreciate what a very challenging task faces the country.
- Jane Backhurst from Christian Aid spoke with sadness of the reduction in overseas aid given by the UK by nearly 50%, and in some places almost 60%, and the very real impact that was having on people's lives. She spoke of the key role played by the Council of Churches in South Sudan in peace building and reconciliation, where they are well respected, seen as providing a neutral forum for negotiations and being a bit of an 'honest broker'.
- It was fantastic to hear about all the projects being supported by churches in the Salisbury Diocese and elsewhere: primary care clinics, salaries for health workers, medicines, bicycles, educational resources, microfinance schemes, agricultural schemes and many others – and to know that here in Shelswell we too are making a contribution.



Thank you for your continuing support of our link with Wulu. Please do let me know if you might be interested in visiting Wulu at some point – it would be wonderful to strengthen the link that we have and to directly observe the projects we are contributing to.

Alice Goodall