

The Bishop of Lichfield's Emergency Appeal for Burma

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Like us, you are no doubt watching the pictures from Myanmar (Burma) with a feeling of helplessness, and asking "What can I do to help?" It is difficult to know what to do when faced with a disaster on this magnitude: tens of thousands dead, 40,000 people missing and one million people homeless.

But there are two things we can do which will make a big difference. We can pray and we can give. Some people have already given through the Disasters Emergency Committee. However, we wish to commend a way of responding further, following the lead of our companion diocese of West Malaysia, which has close ties with the Anglican Church of Myanmar. The Anglican dioceses in Burma are already engaged in long-term agricultural, educational and sustainable development initiatives. Local churches in the country are already deeply involved in the current relief efforts, but they are already looking to the rebuilding and replanting work that will be essential in the coming weeks and months.

We are now making an emergency appeal for funds to assist the long-term rebuilding work that will be needed in Burma.

Every penny received from this appeal will be used to aid the people of Burma, primarily through the Anglican Church in Myanmar working with the mission agency USPG: Anglicans in World Mission.

We invite all churches:

- to hold separate collections, in addition to their usual collections, on Sunday 11th or Sunday 18th May – or on another suitable occasion – and to encourage congregations to respond generously and positively, using Gift Aid envelopes where they can
- to give details of this appeal on their websites, in parish magazines and on pew-sheets pointing people to the website www.lichfield.anglican.org/emergency.

In addition, we would invite:

- all church councils to consider making a special one-off gift, either as part of or in addition to their usual charitable donations
- all youth groups to consider staging special fundraising events, such as car washes, talent auctions, etc, to raise funds to help in this desperate situation.

Our partners in West Malaysia have already sent an immediate cash gift to the Church in Burma, and Bishop Ng Moon Hing has appealed to his congregations for funds and also for two or three volunteers to go to Burma and report back on what more needs to be done.

Of course, in addition to financial gifts, we also need to pray for the victims of the disaster – those who are bereaved, those who are injured, the homeless, the suffering; we need to pray for the leaders of Burma and for the international community – including the United Nations – that a way will be found for the international community to play a full part in the relief efforts; we need to pray for the Christian community of Burma, for strength and wisdom as they respond to the disaster around them; and we need to pray for international aid agencies, including British organisations such as the Disasters Emergency Committee, and its members, which include Christian Aid and Tearfund, as they consider how best to bring relief from the suffering.

Please respond positively to this disaster and demonstrate the love of God in a practical way to desperate people.

+Jonathan Gledhill, Bishop of Lichfield
+Clive Gregory, Bishop of Wolverhampton

+Gordon Mursell, Bishop of Stafford
+Alan Smith, Bishop of Shrewsbury.

Note: Cheques should be made payable to "The Bishop of Lichfield's Emergency Appeal" and sent to Saint Mary's House, The Close, Lichfield, WS13 7LD. Payment can also be made via Internet Banking (Sort Code: 30-95-04; Account number: 01559211; Account name: Bishop of Lichfield's Emergency Appeal).

The attached sheet gives instructions to be followed for Gift Aid donations.

- *This year's Bishop of Lichfield's Lent Appeal was to support the Anglican Church of Myanmar in the work it is already doing to tackle poverty through advances in agriculture. This emergency appeal is a stand-alone appeal and does not affect the Lent Appeal. Please forward your Lent Appeal donation in the usual way as soon as possible if you have not already done so.*



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For reasons of charity law, it is most important that no moneys given to the Bishop's Emergency Appeal get confused with parish funds and used for other purposes in error. The following accountancy procedures will ensure that funds are used correctly:

Churches where the Gift Aid is administered by Saint Mary's House

Please use your existing parish Gift Aid envelopes, but ask the congregation to write "Burma" across the rear.

The recommended accountancy process is as follows:

For non Gift Aid donations:

- Count all loose (non Gift Aid) money and record on the enclosed sheet;
- Count all (non Gift Aid) cheques and record on the enclosed sheet;
- Record any CAF vouchers on the enclosed sheet, and append them to it;

And then, for Gift Aid donations

- Record on the enclosed sheet the names, addresses and amounts given; only recording donations where the donor has fully completed his/her details on the gift aid envelope and done so legibly, *making sure that the amount inside the envelope agrees with what is written on the outside. Any corrections must be made clearly on the envelope and initialled.*

And then

Bank all the cash and cheques received for the Emergency Appeal - as a separate sum from other moneys.

Forward the sheet to Saint Mary's House as soon as possible, together with:

- all properly completed Gift Aid envelopes
- all CAF vouchers made payable to "**Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance**"
- your PCC cheque(s) covering the A plus B total on the sheet, made payable to "**The Bishop of Lichfield's Emergency Appeal**".

Churches who administer their own Gift Aid envelopes

Please follow the procedure above, but use your existing parish Gift Aid envelopes. The church should retain the envelopes to process the Gift Aid claim in the usual way. The cheque forwarded to Saint Mary's House (payable to "The Bishop of Lichfield's Emergency Appeal") should include the amount of tax to be reclaimed. It is not necessary to wait until the reclaimed tax is received prior to forwarding the donation – but the reclaimed tax can only be used for the Bishop's Emergency Appeal. It can not be used for general parish expenditure.

