

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Bishop in Europe:
The Right Reverend Dr. Robert Innes



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

BISHOP'S ADVENT APPEAL 2016

‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace.’ *Haggai* 2:9

This year’s Advent Appeal offers the opportunity to contribute to building up one of the most interesting and strategically significant churches in the diocese.

St. John the Evangelist, Casablanca



St. John’s Anglican Church is a thriving English-speaking church in the heart of downtown Casablanca.

Built in 1906, it is the oldest operating church building in Casablanca and one of the few official places of Christian worship in the city. Although regular attendees hail from Europe, Asia and the Americas, a third of the congregation now comes from sub-Saharan Africa. Services are conducted in English, but between services the church grounds are filled with conversation in a wide variety of tongues.

The Problem

With a capacity of just under 100, St. John’s is bursting at the seams every week. Pews are filled to overflowing. Folding chairs fill the back and are squeezed into the aisles to provide extra seating, leaving little room to pass by. Ceiling fans whirring overhead can’t provide sufficient

relief in the crowded sanctuary during the summer months. The average attendance during Sept-Oct 2015 was over 200 in a church that can only seat a hundred!

Moreover, St. John's has limited space for meeting. A temporary tent structure serves as a fellowship hall, and a repurposed shipping container houses Sunday school classes, with the 11-14 Sunday school class meeting in a coffee shop across the road from the Church.



The Solution

St. John's would love to be able adequately to accommodate its congregation, serve the children better during Sunday school time and have proper space for social interaction and fellowship.

At the beginning of 2015, St. John's began to consider a development project. In May 2015, they commissioned an engineering firm, International Design and Development (IDD), to look at how the site could be developed. In September 2015, they appointed a local architect.

Plans are now well developed. They involve a westward extension of the church to include a mezzanine level and the redevelopment of an existing parsonage building to provide Sunday School, meeting rooms and a roof-top terrace. You can find an inspirational U-Tube video of their plans here: [St John's Casablanca](#).

How You Can Help

The current estimated cost of the project is 300,000 GBP.

Promised donations so far amount to about 100,000 GBP.

I would be thrilled if the diocese could raise a significant sum to help them on their way. St. John's is a church of historical significance operating under special conditions in a majority Muslim country with an extensive ministry to Sub-Saharan migrants. As usual, we invite each chaplaincy to make its own arrangements for the collection of money towards the Bishop's Appeal and then for the local church treasurer to forward collections to the diocesan office.

With every blessing,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

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