

Who we are and how we are called

Bishop Jane Alexander

Second Week of Lent

Thursday March 17

Scripture

Isaiah 24:5

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant

Reflection

Yesterday we considered all parts of creation being in this together. Today let's think about how we might work for a just sharing of the basics of life. When friends from Burundi first came to visit my husband, Tim and me in Edmonton, they were so delighted to be able to get clean drinking water from a tap. Their delight was contagious. Even though I know that not everyone in the world has access to clean drinking water – even to our shame here in Canada – but I had become blind to the blessing of the availability of this gift. Is this true for you perhaps? Did you know that more than one billion of the poorest people on earth do not have access to clean drinking water whilst over one third of the world's population has inadequate access to sanitation?

We know that droughts intensified by climate change are putting immense pressure on the world's freshwater supplies. 1 in 4 people around the world face dire water shortages. By 2050, it's predicted, as many as 50% of people in the world could face water shortages. Many of you may remember Cape Town in South Africa almost completely running out of water in 2018. They almost got to Day Zero completely running out can you imagine that? rough three consecutive years of dry winters from 2015-17, authorities implemented water restrictions, banning outdoor and non-essential water use, encouraging toilet flushing with grey water and eventually limiting consumption to about 13 gallons (49 litres) per person in February 2018. at level of conservation was foreign to many residents of the coastal tourist destination and would likely be jarring to many in Canada where water consumption was an average 329 litres per person per day in 2017.

What can we do to reduce our wastage of earth's most precious resource, given for all God's children? Start by praying every day, pray fervently and fiercely for all God's children to have what they need

Prayer

*When we are unkind to people,
and forget they are God's children,
When we are careless with the beasts,
and forget they are God's creation,*

*When we ill-treat the land,
and forget the splendour of God,
Forgive us, O God of love,
and reconcile us to yourself,
to one another and to the Creation.
Teach us that the earth and all its fullness is yours,
the world and all who dwell in it.
Remind us that your Son too enjoyed the fruits of the harvest in Galilee,
and joins us now as we celebrate your good gifts together.
Call us again to safeguard the gift of life, now and forever. Amen*
www.operationnoah.org/day_of_prayer

Gender rights start with health care

In Tanzania, PWRDF partner the Diocese of Masasi was part of the All Mothers and Children Count program. AMCC improved maternal, newborn and child health, food security and nutrition and access to clean water. Underpinning all these goals was gender. Here are just some of the ways AMCC made a world of difference in the lives of girls and women.

The ripple effects of clean water

Thanks to the AMCC project, funded by PWRDF donors and Global Affairs Canada, a borehole well was built in their village. “I am now more than happy because I no longer have a lengthy walk every day to fetch water, and my daughter no longer arrives late at school.”

But there’s more. Mindu villagers now have access to safe water year-round and the outbreaks of waterborne diseases have diminished. With the long and arduous task of fetching water off the to-do list, women have time to operate profitable home vegetable gardens, breastfeed their babies and get to the health clinic for scheduled visits. The borehole has also brought women together, giving them time to connect with each other through drawing the water from the well.

Let there be light – and cold

For the area with two adjacent villages (Ngapa and Mnazimmoja) and a population of 3,837, providing health and medical services at night using kerosene lamp light is very worrisome. Without electricity, the clinic could not effectively cool vaccines. If a woman went into labour at night, their relatives or partner would have to bring their own kerosene lamp or flashlight to the clinic.

Then AMCC installed solar panels to provide electricity. Now the refrigerator is running 24/7. “Delivery service at night is properly done with sufficient light and no more smoky oil lamps or faint-light torches used. Costs to purchase gas to run a refrigerator and transfer vaccines to a nearby health centre in Nakapanya (80 km return trip) have reduced tremendously,” says Ndunguru. Before solar power, it was difficult to take up critical cases and deliveries at our clinic, especially at night says Mbilinyi. “We were forced to make many referrals even for minor cases and accompaniment to patients including pregnant women, mothers and children under five to other health centres.”

Educating men in prenatal care

At the Muungagno health centre, health care staff worked diligently and struggled to encourage community members, especially pregnant women, to use the delivery services. However, inadequate

supplies and lack of services had discouraged men from allowing and accompanying their wives or partners to deliver there. Instead, they were transferred to the district hospital about 45 km away.

This increase of facility-based deliveries and vaccinations caught the attention of the regional health officers who came for a monitoring visit and wanted to know what made this noticeable jump. Our simple answer was AMCC. Improving the supply chain of essential medical equipment and drugs, close monitoring and supporting CHWs, SMPs and health providers and providing education to community members including pregnant women and their partners have raised more awareness especially among men. Abdallah is now fully motivated and happy to accompany his wife, Sofia. “Always knowledge transforms people,” he said. “I’m happy that AMCC has been my eye-opener and I will continue accompanying my wife when she is pregnant. I will also educate other men to be supportive to their wives and partners and willingly make accompaniment to them for clinic services and for the health of a mother and a child to come.

Read the whole story on our website at

<https://pwrdf.org/gender-rights-start-with-health-care/>