

Isaiah 44 Project Newsletter



Summer 2025

*I will pour water on the thirsty
land and streams on the dry
ground...and people will come
to say, 'I belong to the
LORD:'* *Isaiah 44:2-5*

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TO CONTRIBUTE via check: \$100 or more:

- ✧ Checks payable to
DONORS TRUST
- ✧ MEMO LINE:
**St. Nicholas Charity Legacy
Fund**
- ✧ MAIL TO:
**Donors Trust
1800 Diagonal Rd, Suite 280
Alexandria, VA 22314**

\$1-100:

- ✧ Checks payable to
REV. ROBERT HOLET
- ✧ MEMO LINE:
**St. Nicholas Charity Legacy
Fund**
- ✧ MAIL TO:
**Isaiah44 Project
c/o 129 South Keswick Drive
Troy, VA 22974**

To CONTRIBUTE ONLINE:

[https://client.mydonorstrust.org/
grantee/achcontribution/choose](https://client.mydonorstrust.org/grantee/achcontribution/choose)
✧ **SELECT St. Nicholas Charity
Legacy Fund in dropdown; follow ap-
propriate steps for your contribution**

Facebook Page:

www.tinyurl.com/bdfdm587
or on Facebook search -'Isaiah 44 Project'

New Fund Advisory Firm Serving the Isaiah 44 Project

We are pleased to announce that, in June 2025, we secured a relationship with a new Advisory firm - **Donors Trust** - to process donations for the well drilling projects in Malawi. This change will hopefully improve our ability to receive, acknowledge and expedite delivery of your generosity. As with all such changes, we have new guidelines for contributions. These are outlined below. *Please Note - Donors Trust requires a minimum to \$100 for processing purposes, but checks for amounts less than \$100 are welcome following the guidelines in the INFO box (left).*

Contributions >\$100:

- **By check:** Checks payable to **Donors Trust**; in the memo line, "**St. Nicholas Charity Legacy Fund.**" Mail to **1800 Diagonal Rd, Suite 280 Alexandria, VA 22314**
- **By credit card or ACH online:** The **St. Nicholas Charity Legacy Fund** donation page link— <https://client.mydonorstrust.org/grantee/achcontribution/choose>. Under "Choose project or fund", select "**St. Nicholas Charity Legacy Fund**" from the dropdown menu. The next page asks you if you're intending to give in an amount more than \$8,500 or less than \$8,500. Click on the blue link for whichever option you intend and click continue. Then, simply fill out your information to complete your donation. **Please keep in mind that donations must be at least \$100.**

Contributions < \$100: Follow the guidelines in the INFO box; these contributions will be collected and forwarded to Donors Trust each month.

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Blantyre Borehole Blessing By the Bishop!

The latest borehole provided by our Isaiah 44 Project was blessed in the city of Blantyre after Pascha, by His Eminence Archbishop Fotios, to the great celebration of the community. The new borehole is located on the property of the St. Stylianos parish in the Mponda community of Lirangwe, just north of Blantyre. Archbishop Fotios arrived with local clergy and the Pastor, Fr. Petros, who joined in the prayers.

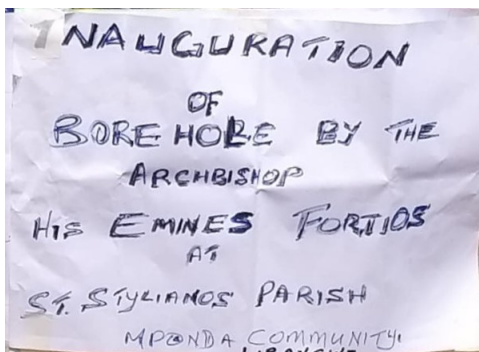
During the celebration were other members of the local community who rejoiced in the provision of a new, much



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Blessing of the Borehole in Blantyre, cont. from p.1

needed water supply for their people. This was affirmed by the presence of several local chiefs who recognized the benefit that would be coming to their local communities.



When a borehole is drilled, it becomes a visible sign to such communities that the Orthodox churches are service oriented, desiring the benefit and blessing of God upon all people. Just as the Lord sends showers upon the earth that it may be fruitful to everyone, so the waters of the wells from the **Isaiah 44 Project** are meant to convey this overarching love and concern of the Lord for all of His people.

The local parish becomes a place where people experience, first-hand, a tangible blessing from God and the people of the parish can

then continue to find other ways to serve their communities.

From the beginning of Christianity, a spirit of service to others, especially those in need, was a powerful witness of the presence of Christ in the Churches and the love of God for all of His people. May it be so in Malawi through the work of His Church. 🙏



New Fund Advisor cont. from p.1

These donations will be gathered together and forwarded to **DonorsTrust** for the **St. Nicholas Charity Legacy Fund**.

Maximize the Benefit of your contribution!

Preferred Modes of Donations - Whenever possible, we wish to encourage contributors to donate using a check rather than a credit card. Our client services representative at **DonorsTrust** reminds us that, while this may seem old fashioned or less convenient, making donations by check will allow every donation to have its maximum impact. Unfortunately, *credit card contributions oftentimes come with higher fees than that of ACH bank transfers, wire transfers, or mail-in checks*. Credit card contributions over \$100 are absolutely something can be done but our hope for everyone is to be able to maximize your contributions to support this worthy venture!

A Note About Wire Transfers: Wire transfer of funds is also possible but, as noted above, there are extra fees involved. Please contact **DonorsTrust** at 703-535-3563 for information on how to support the **St. Nicholas Charity Legacy Fund** at **DonorsTrust** via wire transfer. They will be happy to help you complete this process.

As before, when the **Fund's** donations accrue to a sufficient level, we will request a grant to an appropriate 501c3 in the US (such as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA) who, working in cooperation with us, will forward the funds to the Orthodox Archdiocese of Malawi via wire transfer. We monitor the disbursements of these funds in Malawi, to ensure that they are applied to drilling the boreholes, and projects as intended. We are ever-thankful to God for all who provide these skilled services to expedite the work of the **Isaiah 44 Project** and this holy mission. 🙏

Heads up! ZOOM CALL IN THE WORKS!

As a follow up to a previous suggestion, we will be contacting those of you who are interested in a more active role in the **Isaiah44 Project**. Please contact Fr. Robert via e-mail (*see p.1*) if you are interested in this discussion; we hope to gather within the next six weeks to discuss next steps via a ZOOM call.

Well-Drilling Ministry: Facing Challenges with Faith

Recently, I had an opportunity to visit with a remarkable man, Mr. Ken Wood, who has been led by the Lord to do well drilling in Africa for over 20 years - the fruit of his business experience drilling wells in Maryland. Ken serves as the CEO of a 501c3 called *Lifetime Wells International* which has drilled thousands of wells in Ghana and Tanzania over the past two decades. In addition to the many insights he shared regarding God's blessings through his remarkable work, he also talked about how he and his team have encountered resistance, difficulties and challenges on a multitude of fronts.

In service projects like this, each task is essential, like the links of a chain. And if any one link breaks, the connection and capability to carry out the work is lost until it is fixed. Ken spoke of how technical challenges can arise, like the composition of soil and rock - requiring specialty equipment to complete the borehole. He mentioned how the maintenance of equipment is critical; if some internal part is not lubricated or maintained, it breaks. And when it breaks in Africa, good luck finding a replacement part or someone who can do that specialty repair work!




Ken Wood in Africa

Finances will always be a challenge for any charitable endeavor - especially in places like Africa where the lack of resources (like casing pipe or pumps) is dependent on international monetary exchange rates that can change rapidly overnight. So an equipment order that is placed today cannot be filled if the currency value drops 20% overnight and the costs skyrocket. As Ken works with heavy equipment, there's always a threat that some politician will just test the waters by getting police or militia to confiscate the equipment in the name of the government - and a half million dollar drilling rig can be caught in a legal web for years. Thankfully we haven't encountered that challenge in Malawi! But the usual challenges of workforce (training), communications and languages, misunderstandings, theft/fraud and, as we have found, bad weather can intervene.

As Ken described some of these things I found myself nodding my head, as we too in the *Isaiah 44 Project* have encountered some setbacks. Five months ago, we thanked God that the much-needed rains of the rainy season came this year, unlike in 2024 when their absence led to food shortages and even starvation. After several months, in some places, there was too much rain and one drilling project could not be completed because the ground became too soupy for the equipment or setting the concrete work at the pump. There's also been a challenge for Fr. Nicodemus and those working in Malawi to find a new contractor who can do the work affordably, as the current contractor has been unable or unwilling to fulfill his commitment, seriously delaying future projects.

So why the challenges? We're trying to do God's work so shouldn't this be smooth sailing?

Well, one might think so. But a review of the scriptures shows us that the Lord often allows challenges and setbacks to occur. We know this in our own lives - be it with a medical treatment or a job application. Sometimes things don't work out so well. But it's also true in church work. Why? Well, Our Lord has His mysterious reasons, but experience shows that often such delays have a divine purpose. Sometimes God's timing is not our own, slowing us down so that we don't get ahead of ourselves, and the Lord, with our plans. And that delay might just allow us to rethink some part of our plan—and do a better job of carrying out the task. Another reason is simply personal - we have to learn *patience*. The Bible says, '*Wait on the Lord and be of strong courage*' (Ps.27:14) for a reason. In doing so, we have to relinquish c-o-n-t-r-o-l of a situation and learn to take courage in faith for God to do His part and execute His plan. One of the most common experiences in the experience of Christianity and the work of the Church is that, simply, the Devil is at work, throwing obstacles in our path as we seek to do God's will. This calls forth from us *perseverance sustained by prayer* - the willingness to stick to the task despite setbacks and acquiring a spiritual vision of life.

In my discussions with Ken Wood, he repeated examples of how setbacks would occur, coming from seemingly nowhere— and well-drilling would grind to a halt. But the Lord will be with us if we remain committed to His work and may well open new doors as we wait, faithfully. To this end, *The Isaiah 44 Project* will remain open to other possibilities working with the Orthodox Churches in the Alexandria Patriarchate, to bring life-giving water to those who need it. Responding to His call to be good stewards, we'll acquire spiritual lessons of self-control, patience and perseverance as well. As Fr. Chilembwe is constantly emphasizing this too - we should all be aware that this is GOD'S work! 

Looking Toward the East - Mission Trip?

It's hard to believe that this time last year I was in Malawi on a 'once-in-a-lifetime' trip to represent the *Isaiah 44 Project*. And now the question is - was that to be just a once-in-a-lifetime event? Or is a second trip later this Fall needed and would it be helpful? Fr. Nicodemus says, 'Of course' and his counsel is not to be taken lightly! On such a venture, we could set about the following goals:

- Finding ways to expedite well drilling and other **water** projects to minimize costs.
- Determine the best practices to enable us to meet the goal of a functional borehole/ water source at each Orthodox parish.
- Build a team of Malawians (clergy and laity) to serve as a support network in Malawi to sustain and grow this work.
- Better learn to understand the Malawian people, their culture and customs
- Investigate options for other important ministries - including vocational development, spiritual education, youth ministry, medical mission care, etc.
- Search for elephants and hippos and crocodiles



There have been some planning setbacks so *your prayers will make all the difference as to whether or not it takes place if we are able to realize the blessings of God He intends for the Isaiah 44 Project*. If you have any suggestions for the trip - please send them along!

Carolina Road Trip - Exploring Mission Service

Being involved in the *Isaiah 44 Project* has blessed us to encounter many people who have a true heart for service and missions in the name of Christ - most recently at a site in Marion, NC where **Equip International** demonstrates numerous forms of practical aspects of mission service. In early July, I was joined by Dean Gakos - a longtime parishioner of St Nicholas parish where I served, who is an engineer by trade and a supporter of the *Isaiah 44 Project* - to trek to NC to investigate their ministry. We met Ben Adkins, who has served and provided services to missions internationally for decades. Ben's simple, strong Christian faith and spiritual insights propel a vision for bringing strong support and training to any groups who wish to serve in mission operations. The *Equip International* staff demonstrate agricultural techniques, mission health care, and key services like repairing hand water pumps, solar power capabilities and other equipment for mission use.



The Aurum 3000 Brick Machine



Last year, Fr. Nicodemus Chilembwe proposed a program for a vocational development opportunity for young men in Malawi who are unable to provide basic essentials for their families. *Equip International* has acquired the highly effective Auram 3000 brick/block-making machine which is affordable, simple and geared to missions. Using the Auram 3000, they have built a demonstration building for onsite which is sound and strong. In Malawi, a team of men could make blocks for building homes, churches and commerce, while supporting their families. The brick machine uses local materials (dirt) but the blocks are very strong, unlike adobe bricks.

We hope to explore these kinds of options for channeling our efforts and financial resources. It's exciting to think that the men of Malawi could use such a machine to create the blocks for a new mission church! *More to come....*