

# St. Luke's Formby



## Shyira, Rwanda

Rwanda is referred to as the "Land of a Thousand Hills". Much of the country has volcanic soil and is very fertile. In rural areas the hillsides are mostly cultivated with small homes built from mud bricks and having corrugated iron roofs at the centre of small plots of land. The picture on the right gives some impression of this. The home owners cultivate the land around their house with any surplus produce sold to provide a small income. Some casual work may enhance their income, but otherwise they are totally dependent on the food they are able to grow.



The country has two wet and two dry seasons a year. That gives two harvests which is fortunate because people do not have electricity so there are no refrigerators or freezers. We have been told that "People can get a bit hungry as they wait for the next harvest."

The village of Shyira extends for just over a mile along a mountain ridge. At the southern end there is the social centre, and going north there is the primary and nursery schools, children's centre and church, the old hospital recently used as a health centre, the secondary school and sports field. There are a few homes along the ridge, and many more on the slopes below. Shyira parish is quite large, extending down the slopes of the ridge and having a daughter church, called a canister, near the bottom of the hill.

Over recent years there has been a gradual change in the climate and some quite extensive damage has been done by floods and wind on occasion. People are unable to pay for insurance so the changing climate has serious consequences for families.

# Floods and Landslides in Shyira

We have an email from Rev Jacques, Pastor of Shyira as follows:

During the night of 2nd [May] we had the catastrophe of floods and landslides in Shyira and in the part of Western province in general. In Shyira many houses and crops were destroyed. one person found dead and we are still searching for three who are lost.

The picture alongside shows how crops have been devastated.



The picture on the left shows how the floods have affected quite large areas, with damage to one of the buildings.

The latest information we have is that 133 families have been made homeless and that the 540 members of those families are

now living on Shyira hill, using the buildings of the old hospital. Each family has been given just one single mattress by the regional government.

Since 2001 St. Luke's has been linked to St. Mark's in Shyira. We have helped restore the community after the genocide of 1994, and would like to help the people through the present challenge. Please pray for the people of Shyira asking that they may be aware of the Lord accompanying them in their present difficulties.

The parish faces costs of £36,600 to provide food, clothing and bedding for the displaced people. They do not have the money, so we wonder, can we help them? Donations may be made through the parish website, [stlukesformby.org.uk](http://stlukesformby.org.uk), in church identified as a donation, or through the church bank account.