

Prayers for Peace, Hope and Justice

State of Disaster

According to EWN more than 100 000 residents across the Western Cape have been affected by the storm that has battered the city for more than a week. Gale force winds and unprecedented amounts of rain have made it untenable for those who already live in precarious circumstances for example those who live in informal settlements, close to flood plains or the homeless or unhoused. A mini tornado swept through the Cape Town suburb of Wynberg lifting roofs off homes. 300 schools have been affected in the Western Cape and about 120 of those schools need urgent support. 73 roads across the province have been closed. The Western Cape has now been declared a State of Disaster because of the humanitarian crisis which is continuing to emerge.

As we prepare to pray can I ask you to think about a specific person, a particular child, a specific family, a specific image you have seen on television, heard about on the radio or seen on social media and think about what you were not shown – the family wading through knee deep water in their home is a family who had plans for this week, maybe a birthday party or someone had a job interview or an important soccer game at school. Let us focus on what we were not shown and not simply the headlines or statistics which make the news – the news

Let us pray:

Dear God enable us to have deep and sincere compassion for those hit hardest by the storm, raging winds and unpredictable weather conditions we are all enduring in different ways.

Thank you for the example you are and have set for us about offering tangible help and comfort during times of trouble and we see that in the many organisations who are doing your work right here on earth – the Haven, the Homestead, U-Turn, The Warehouse in connection with the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, Gift of the Givers, and even local government structures.

We ask that a deep understanding of what people need informs caring decisions are made about the distribution of help especially by government agencies. Legacies of coloniality and Apartheid spatial geography have determined where some people can live safely and where others have been forced to live. Let us pray for a society where everyone has a space to be equally safe and cared for in these complex times.

Finally, Lord, let us pray for your earth for the water and soil and rocks and wind which were here before us and with whom we as humans need to figure out how to live together. We always have too much water when there are storms, or too little when there is a drought – but when will we learn to live with just enough. Where is the water supposed to go, which channels, ravines, arteries, streams, rivers have not been built over, redirected, closed off? Where are the winds supposed to blow? How can we all be? What will be required for us to learn to live more gently on and with the earth?

Let us pray the prayer for Africa and the world:

God bless Africa and the world
Guard our children
Guide our leaders
and give us peace

Rose-Anne Reynolds
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