

A Call to Pray: January 2020

**In the tender compassion of our God,
the dawn from heaven shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

(from the Benedictus, the Song of Zechariah, Luke 1:78–79)

As the dawn breaks first on the islands of the South Pacific at the opening of the year, we focus this month on the needs of those in the South Pacific Area. As we await the dawn of the new heaven and earth described in Revelation 21, it feels as though the whole created world waits.

We pray for those affected by the devastating bush fires in Eastern Australia. For those whose homes and workplaces have been destroyed; for those who have lost loved ones and treasured possessions; for those who battle the flames on land and from the air. We grieve for the damage done to wild life, flora and fauna. The charred landscape waits for life-giving rain; the people long for relief from scorching heat; those in the cities crave fresh air. The whole world waits.

We pray for the islanders of Fiji who suffer from typhoon, storm and flood. For those living in low-lying areas who fear rising sea-levels will wash away their homes; for those who wait for boats offering rescue and security; for those whose livelihood depends on the sea. We feel for those who have to begin a new life in another location because of the damage done to their community by the forces of nature. The whole world waits.

We pray for the tourists caught unawares by the sudden eruption of the volcano on White Island off New Zealand's north-east coast. We mourn the loss of young lives and unrealised potential. We ask God to comfort those who grieve; we give thanks for the loving care shown by the people of New Zealand. We pray for medical staff who provide healing and hope. The whole world waits.

We thank God for the church that speaks out on behalf of creation; that shares out of the bounty that God has provided; that offers sanctuary and support, hope and love to those in particular need.

We pray for the World Federation Area and Unit leaders of this South Pacific Area, that includes the seven island nations of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga. We ask God to bless the work being done to address environmental issues, reduce domestic violence, teach new skills and encourage spiritual growth.

We thank God for the Helen Kim Memorial Scholars, Teps and Onelea. We pray for those who have been elected as future leaders of the South Pacific Area, that God will prepare and guide them.

Creator God, we turn to you, the light of the world, to guide us into the way of heavenly peace.

Amen.

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