

## **AN UPDATE TO THE DIOCESE OF FALSE BAY FOLLOWING THE SEVERE FLOODS OF SUNDAY 24 & MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Dear People of God spread throughout the length and breadth of False Bay Diocese - prayers and peace to you all at this time of chaos, hardship, loss, and destruction as the recent heavy rains caused widespread flash flooding, landslides and rockfalls wreaked havoc everywhere, resulting in the closure of many major roads and thoroughfares. Just for your information, Overberg received 170mm of rain and the Winelands area recorded 133mm within a 24-hour period. This automatically catapulted the Western Cape into immediate destruction. We witnessed yet again the incredible power of nature.

It's become clear from media reports and assessments from our staff on the ground, that areas most seriously affected fall within the Diocese of False Bay.

The Clergy and SocDev have been asked to keep their ears on the ground and report the levels of destruction, human casualties, and fatalities in these areas. To date we have received reports that:

- ❖ Thousands upon thousands of homes were flooded, both in the formal and informal areas.
- ❖ In informal areas homes containing everything families own were swept away by raging waters.
- ❖ In some areas electricity and water supplies were disrupted. Most supplies have now been re-connected.

As we take stock of damage and destruction, the parts of False Bay severely affected are:

**Philippi – especially Samora Machel:** Revd. Patrick Tembani reports that many families in Samora Machel lost their homes. He further reports that currently things are under control. Community members are assisting each other with the reconstruction of homes. It was reported that three children were electrocuted in their attempt to escape to a drier location. Revd. Patrick is trying to get more information.

Let's pray for the families of the children who died and for the wider community.

**Bredasdorp, Napier, Arniston and Struisbaai:** Canon Francois Lewis reported that many homes in these areas were flooded. Families are still cut-off from the main town because roads became 'no go' zones. He also reported that farmers were heavily impacted as crops were destroyed. How ironic that for the first time in years the canola fields along the N2 looked extremely healthy until the floods hit. Families who were accommodated in community and church halls have returned to their homes because of the danger of burglaries. Like elsewhere, Community members, diocesan staff and disaster management sprang into action immediately ensuring that food, clothing, mattresses, and other essentials were provided.

**Faure:** Revd. Loraine von Willingh reported that St. Paul's was a little more prepared for natural disaster compared with the flooding during the month of June. Homes were flooded but they were dealing with the chaos.

**Groot Drakenstein:** Revd. Wilfred Meyer reported that Franschoek and La Motte incurred serious damage to roads and pedestrian access ways. Community members and disaster management are working together. Things are beginning to return to normal.

**Macassar:** Canon Luleka Nyhila reported that sections of Macassar are still flooded. About 60 families are accommodated in a Community Hall. She also reported that residents bearing placards were out on the streets to draw attention to ongoing dissatisfaction with service delivery.

**Strand and Rusthof:** Ven. Delmaine Petersen and Canon Luleka visited the area. They delivered hygiene packs and other essentials to the Methodist Church – a collection point for donations. Families living in the area just below Gordon's Bay Road were evacuated as their homes and streets were seriously flooded. The water table is slowly receding, but the damage to their homes is enormous.

Many other areas in Helderberg, Caledon, Robertson, Bot River, Winelands and other places have seen extremely high levels of water. Major roads were washed

away. The bridge on the N2 near Bot River crumbled under the extreme force of water, making that section of the N2 impassable.

**Helderberg Basin especially Sir Lowry's Pass Village:** from all reports it seems like Sir Lowry's Pass Village remains severely affected. A river that runs through the Village burst its banks making access impossible. Church members are still unable to get to the Chapel of St. Matthew. Scores of families living in Sir Lowry's Pass are staying in the local Community Hall. All Saints Cathedral Community sprang into action immediately and assisted affected families with hot meals, warm clothes, hygiene packs, mattresses, and other necessities.

It's going to take a few weeks before roads are cleared of debris and reconstruction can take place.

As a Diocese we offer our support and the assurance of prayers to all families affected by the floods. We respectfully call on all Anglicans living in False Bay to do whatever they can to help families who have lost so much because of the flood.

We remember and lament that many families have had to cope with almost three years of Covid19 restrictions, health scares, the death of loved ones and loss of employment. To add insult to injury many now suffer the never-ending burden of loadshedding. Then came the June rains which caused absolute mayhem all over the Diocese and now the same thing has happened because of vicious Spring rains.

Let us as God's people stand together and assist wherever we can to alleviate suffering and be a loving presence to those in need. Thanks be to God for the many clergy and lay people who immediately sprang into action to assist families, despite Monday being a public holiday.

SocDev Staff and others are just a phone call away and will continue to assist with food, blankets, mattresses, clothes, hygiene packs and other necessities. We are grateful that SocDev has joined hands with other organisations in this current crisis: Respond, Carista, Methodist Church, House of Grace, Ashraful Aid, PSFA, Disaster Management and of course our local parishes.

We kindly ask that every parish lights a candle and offer prayers for all families affected by the floods at all Services this and next weekend.

## **FINANCIAL AID TO DIOCESE ASSISTING WITH FLOOD MATTERS**

Please refer to the Diocesan Webpage for banking details for those who would like to donate towards the work of False Bay Diocese with those affected by the floods. Kindly include a line '**Flood Relief**' so that the Administrator can allocate the funds correctly. We earnestly encourage local businesses and overseas friends of the Diocese to use this avenue for any assistance they might like to offer.

Pray for our sisters and brothers who suffer one setback after another - many from disadvantaged areas. May we know that God is our help and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. May each one of us be a keeper to our sisters and brothers and show the human face of God during this sad and painful time.

God bless the support given by Clergy, community organisations, disaster management teams, SocDev, local government, community members and faith communities - all endeavouring to bring aid and relief to affected communities.

*Ronald*

## **DEAN RONALD PHILLIPS**

Vicar General Diocese of False Bay

### **THE DIOCESE OF FALSE BAY BANKING DETAILS**

Name of A/C Holder:	<b>The Diocese of False Bay</b>
Bank:	<b>Standard Bank</b>
A/C Number:	<b>072416289</b>
Reference: <i>please include the line</i>	<b>'Flood Relief'</b>
Branch Code:	<b>051 001</b> [for electronic payments]
SWIFT Code:	<b>SBZA ZA JJ</b>

*The Vicar General and Chapter sincerely thank you for your kind donation towards flood-victim relief.*