

## Be in Prayer This Week

- **The people of Tonga.** The eruption of the Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano (under water 20 miles southeast of Tonga) Saturday covered part of Tonga with a thick layer of ash & triggered tsunami waves which have caused unprecedented damage there. The tsunami also hit coastal areas as far away as the U.S. west coast. Supersonic air pressure waves, the eruption caused, were seen from space & felt in the United Kingdom & Finland. The communications cable that connects the Tonga islands & Tonga with the world has been destroyed, leaving parts of Tonga completely cut off. It will be at least a month before full communications can be restored. On some islands all houses are gone. Much of the water supply is contaminated by ash or salt water. While only a few deaths and injuries are known, the ash & tsunami have caused devastating damage. The people are in desperate need, especially of food & drinking water. Australia & New Zealand (3 to 5 hours away by air) are responding. Tonga is afraid COVID will come with aid workers. Therefore, some international groups are sending material help but not people. (Tonga closed their borders when the pandemic began, & 80% of the people are vaccinated. This has been working) They have had only 1 case of COVID. Tonga is an archipelago of 169 islands (only 36 are inhabited) located in the South Pacific 1,100 miles north east of New Zealand. Further eruptions are possible over the next weeks.
- **Ethiopia** where a year-old war between the government & Tigray region leaders has involved atrocities on both sides. Civilians are dying of hunger & lack of medical care as well as in the violence.
- **The COVID Pandemic.** Omicron continues to surge. The vast majority of people hospitalized are unvaccinated. They are overwhelming hospitals, making it difficult for people needing other hospital care to get it. This is putting more lives at risk. Children continue to be hard hit.
- **Victims of Gun Violence** – there have now been 22 mass shootings (up from 15 last week) in 2022 in which 19 people have died & 82 people have been injured (up from 16 & 52 last week). The 2022 gun death total is now 2,138 (up by 816 from last week). 72 deaths & 186 of the injured (up from 37 & 105 last week) have been children (17 or younger).
- **The Ukraine crisis** which threatens to lead to war.
- **All those dealing with winter storms & their aftermath**



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*When we pray for the people in need in our world, we are praying for peace. Peace is not just the absence of war, it is Shalom – living in harmony with each other & with God's creation. Shalom means health, safety, tranquility, wholeness, & rest – the welfare & prosperity of all. Praying for the needs of others is an important first step in loving people as God calls us to. Next steps include using our time, talents, & resources to help others when disaster strikes, offering comfort in times of need, & working for change when the suffering of others comes from discrimination, persecution, exploitation, or abuse. When shalom does not exist for everyone, no one is fully at peace!*

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