

## This Week Pray For

- **The people of Tonga** as they continue to try to recover from unprecedented damage caused by the Jan. 15 volcanic eruption. Some outlying settlements were wiped out. Some people may not be able to return home. Damage to Tonga's communications cable has left the country largely cut off. Needed aid arriving, brought COVID with it. Tonga, had only 1 case of COVID before the eruption, they now have more than 60 despite precautions. Nearly all eligible residents are fully vaccinated, so cases have been mild.
- **Madagascar** – where most people are desperately poor, is struggling to recover from 2 cyclones (190 people were killed & 190,000 were displaced). The destruction has been devastating & a 3<sup>rd</sup> storm is on the way. Part of the country is also facing drought & food shortages.
- **Children with autism in China & those who serve them.** Few autistic children in China have access to the quality services. The You'ai (Brethren) Hospital has opened a new center for autistic children, led by a Christian occupational therapist (who lives in the house formerly occupied by Brethren Global Mission co-executives Ruoxia Li and Eric Miller). They began working with the first student before the facility was completed.
- **Petropolis, Brazil.** Torrential rain caused flooding & mudslides. 94 are confirmed dead; many are left homeless.
- **The COVID Pandemic.** The number of reported new COVID cases is declining, though still high. Experts fear fewer new case reports may be due to a reduction in testing. The number of deaths is rising. The U.S has seen more than 78 million cases of COVID and more than 925,000 deaths. Ohio alone has had 2,638,202 cases & 35,372 deaths as of February 16.
- **Victims of Gun Violence** – there have been 50 mass shootings (up from 42 last week) in 2022 in which 58 people died & 179 people were injured. The 2022 gun death total is now 5,464. 187 deaths & 456 of the injured have been children (17 or younger).



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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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