

Prayers Can Change Things



The U.N. has designated July 11th World Population Day – a day to highlight the urgency and importance of population issues. It took hundreds of thousands of years for the world population reached 1 billion (in 1804). It then took just over 200 years to reach 7 billion in 2010. By 2022 the world population reached 8 billion. It is expected to reach 9 billion by 2037, and 10 billion by 2058. (The World Population Clock). 2007 was the first year in which more people lived in urban areas than in rural areas. By 2050 it is expected that 60% of the world's people will live in cities. This year's World Population Day theme is "Unleashing the power of gender equality: Uplifting the voices of women and girls to unlock our world's infinite possibilities." UN Secretary-General António Guterres says: "Gender-based discrimination harms everyone – women, girls, men, and boys. Investing in women uplifts all people, communities, and countries." Women and girls make up 49.7% of the world's population, but in many parts of the world, they have few rights and little say in their own lives. All too many are denied education, the ability to work, manage their own affairs (finances, families, etc.), or have a voice in their communities. The UNFPA 2023 State of World Population report illustrates that where the voices of women and girls are heard and they have autonomy over their lives and bodies, they and their families thrive. Pray for the women and girls in this world and that they will be empowered to use their gifts for the good of everyone.

- **People Facing Flooding** – very heavy rain is causing flooding in many places in the world. Right now, remember the people in Japan & India as well as those in New York state and Vermont in the U.S. where the flooding has been devastating.
- **Countries experiencing excessive heat** – including Mexico, India, China & the U.S. June was the hottest June on record with temperatures well over 100 degrees in many places. Much of the world is facing warmer than usual temperatures & ocean waters are also unusually warm for this time of year.
- **Victims of Gun Violence** – Already this year, 22,936 people have died in gun violence (up 1,885 from week) including 969 children (up 80 from last week). 20,001 people have been injured (up 1,954 from last week) including 2,580 children (up 258 from last week). 12,804 of the deaths are suicides (up 990 from last week). There have already been 375 mass shootings (up 44 from last week) this year. (Gun Violence Archive statistics). This has been a deadly week.
- **Canada** – so far, the fire season there has been horrific & broken all records. A quarter of the fires are in Quebec causing the evacuation of at least 4,400 people. The smoke is raising health concerns in Canada, the U.S. & Europe. It is likely the problem will be around all summer.
- **Ukraine where the war continues.** Attacks on civilians & atrocities against them, continue to be intensifying after the challenge to Putin's power.
- **Refugees across the world** – Church World Service reports that every 2 seconds, someone in the world has to leave their home & everything they know due to the threat of violence, persecution, or disaster.
- **Haiti** – where people continue to recover from recent storms & deal with the political instability & violence that grips the country. Many Hattian Brethren ministries have had to move north where it is a bit safer & more stable.