



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

After some initial rapid and damaging flooding felt in various parts of Victoria and Tasmania, a slow-moving flood situation continues to evolve in Victoria. In the initial rains, and now more slowly, many homes have been inundated; many roads have been cut and infrastructure damaged; much farmland is or will be underwater; and many are facing periods of isolation or of not being able to return to their homes.

There are enormous efforts being undertaken to build levees and to prepare for coming floodwaters, and huge efforts to clean up after floodwaters have passed – with the likelihood of more rainfall to come.

The greatest concern is for the people whose homes have been flooded and providing for basic needs. At this stage, no Uniting AgeWell residential accommodation properties have been directly affected, although many Home Care clients have been impacted and AgeWell staff have helped a number of clients to relocate to safe accommodation. Uniting facilities have not been directly impacted at this stage, and Uniting will be providing important services in many communities in the recovery phase.

The church and hall at Rochester have been inundated, and Mooroopna has also been hit; insurance services have been responding quickly as required. Over the next few weeks, longer-term responses that will be needed will become clear.

The Moderator's Emergency Response Fund is open for any individual, congregation or Church Council who would like to contribute towards disaster responses by the Church. Particular needs will be discerned by communities over the weeks ahead, for which the generosity of the wider Church will be greatly appreciated. Further details can be found at: victas.uca.org.au.

Psalm 69 begins with words about being found in deep waters, with the floods sweeping over. In the centre of the Psalm there is a prayer:

**But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord.
At an acceptable time, O God,
in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me.
With your faithful help rescue me
from sinking in the mire...**

Please pray with me for all those who are disrupted by the floods and who face losses of home, business and crops that they may find themselves supported by God's love and our prayers and practical support. Please join me in praying also for those who are working hard in the preparation and relief work, and for readiness to respond as needed through the recovery time that still lies ahead for communities across the country.

Peace and grace,

David Fotheringham

