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The site of St Saviour's Church, Quaama

PASTORAL LETTER

to be read in churches of the Diocese

Dear friends in Christ,

"To you, O LORD, I cry. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flames have burned all the trees of the field. Even the wild animals cry to you because the watercourses are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness."

Joel 1:19-20

The words of God's prophet express the cries of our hearts. We grieve with and for those who have lost property and loved ones. We groan with and for creation as it waits for rescue. We long for quenching rain and relief.

Over the past week members of Parishes across our Diocese have worked selflessly to care for their neighbours. Our Anglicare disaster response teams have staffed evacuation centres alongside other volunteers. Church buildings have been opened to provide a space for reflection and a place of refuge. Please join with me in thanking God for every act of courage and kindness.

After the time of crisis has passed I will be communicating how we will work together as we move into recovery. In the meantime can I encourage you to respond with prayer and generosity. I have included some prayer resources for you to use in your Sunday services and other gatherings. You can make donations to Anglicare's disaster response and relief efforts by visiting www.anglicare.com.au. Please distribute this information widely.

The photo included with this letter shows what is left of St Saviour's Church Quaama in the Parish of Cobargo. You will notice the bell is still standing. I look forward to the time when it once again summons a community to grieve and to find comfort and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Risen Jesus be our comfort and hope now and always.

Your brother and Bishop,
+ Mark Short
Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn
3 January 2020

