



## The Diocese of California

*The Episcopal Church*

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP: AUSTIN KEITH RIOS

1055 Taylor St. † San Francisco, CA 94108 † USA

Dear Siblings in DioCal:

Most of you know that the diocese that raised me up for ministry, and the place where I served for so many years before going to Rome, is the Diocese of Western North Carolina. Both Maleah's and my parents still live there, as do countless friends and members of this Body we share in Christ.

So when the pictures and sparse communications about the unprecedented damage from Hurricane Helene started rolling in, my heart sank and my prayers intensified. By the grace of God and sheer luck, my immediate family's health and homes are ok, but so many others whom I love and care about have not been able to escape the devastation. And that is to say nothing about the damage sustained by churches, like The Cathedral of All Souls, that serve as beacons of hope and gathering for people in times of both joy and crisis.

**I ask you to join me in praying for the victims of this storm, not only in Western North Carolina, but throughout the Southeastern United States.**

On behalf of our Diocese, I am sending financial assistance to help Bishop José McLoughlin and the Diocese of Western North Carolina in this time of extreme need and uncertainty. If you would like to send additional support that will assist in the overall efforts to rebuild after this catastrophe, I encourage you to donate to Episcopal Relief and Development's efforts at this address: <https://support.episcopalrelief.org/hurricane-relief/>.

We live in a world where so many are suffering in the face of enduring wars and conflicts, where so many are in need of basic access to clean water and food—a world that is reeling more and more from the effects of unchecked climate change. Our offerings of financial support and prayer can seem meager in the face of such overwhelming need.

And yet, when we reach out to help our neighbors—whether they live in the Bay, in Gaza, in Ukraine, in Congo, or in the ancient mountains of Western North Carolina, we open ourselves to remembering the truth that animates the very heart of our faith.

We are all children of God whose lives are bound to one another.

And we, as children of God, know God's love and mercy most fully when sharing it freely with one another.

May we all live into that truth as we serve together and give together, both here in the Bay Area and further afield, in the weeks and months to come.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Austin Rios".

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