

# A Personal Commitment to Creation Discipleship

Rev. Patrick Stephens

*Holy week to Easter  
Holy Saturday April 16*

## Scripture

### **Mark 15:46-47**

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

## Reflection

As we journey together with Jesus and his followers through the events of his suffering and death, I can only imagine the grief and despair that would accompany those who took on the solemn task of laying Jesus's body to rest in the tomb. Having just witnessed the violent, methodical, and public killing of their loved one, those closest to Jesus laid his body in a borrowed tomb, sealed the entrance and departed. I can only imagine the shock, the disappointment, the sadness and the pain of that Holy Saturday.

The grief of loss is real. Too often, we do not allow ourselves and each other the opportunity to grieve properly. Today, the church embraces the opportunity to feel and express our sorrow. Having known such hope and expectation, our dreams for the future can be dashed so suddenly. When we consider the many losses that creation has endured over the past century, it seems almost too much to bear. Today, we grieve for the earth. We grieve that the gift of God, so graciously entrusted to humanity's care has been violently, methodically, and publicly harmed.

Yes, there is work to do. But today we pause to weep. May God have mercy and save this creature, fashioned from clay

## Prayer

*God our companion,  
You inhabit the silence of meaningless pain  
You breathe our wordless lament  
You swallow the bitterness of our shock  
Stay with us, Lord, and pray*

*God our heartbeat through day and night,  
You give us the imagination of hope,  
The grammar of love,*

*And the courage of calm  
Stay with us Lord, and heal*

*God our fearlessness  
In your image you have made us whole,  
To wait with the suffering  
And to tend the wounded  
To break cycles of abuse and violence  
With the boldness of compassion  
Stay with us, Lord, and hope*

*For yours is the power and the glory,  
Before, within, and after our grief  
Now and forever. Amen.*

*Archbishop Fred Hiltz, responding to the April 2018 violent van attack in North York, Ontario*

### *Partners support agricultural recovery*

PWRDF is partnering with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and TSURO Trust in Zimbabwe to make a world of difference in the lives of approximately 28,900 people in Zimbabwe still reeling from the affects of Cyclone Idai.

In four wards of Chimanimani district, one of the worst affected by Cyclone Idai, 4,910 families will receive a one-time package of 10 kg maize seed, 15 kg bean seed and 2 kg finger millet seed. The seeds will be distributed in time for planting in October to December 2019 to help re-establish agricultural livelihoods.

PWRDF is contributing \$26,000 from fund donated to Cyclone Idai relief, as well as \$59,000 from its Foodgrains Bank equity. A 4:1 match from Global Affairs Canada will make up the entire budget of \$404,471. “We are grateful for our partnership with CFGB and with TSURO in Zimbabwe,” says Executive Director Will Postma. “They have worked hard on the project. We are glad to be of support too to communities so tragically affected by Cyclone Idai, still today.”

Given the current food insecurity in the district, affected households in these wards will also be receiving food assistance from other agencies in the form of cash or food transfers. Households participating in the seed distribution must:

- be food insecure
- have crops that were affected by the cyclone
- have sufficient land to utilize the full seed package
- have prior experience growing maize, beans and finger millet
- and are targeted to also receive food or cash assistance from other agencies

Cyclone Idai hit eastern Zimbabwe with heavy rains and strong winds on March 15, 2019. The storm caused rivers to rise and flash flooding and subsequent deaths, destruction of property and livelihoods. Across Chimanimani district, 52% of all seed stocks were lost and farmers need assistance to jump-start agricultural recovery, regain their productive capacity and to restore food and nutritional security.

The Civil Protection Unit-Chimanimani estimates the cyclone affected 270,000 people in the district. According to the Department of Agriculture and Extension, 18,244 out of 39,789 hectares of arable land in Chimanimani district were damaged by the cyclone. Chimanimani district is projected to be at Integrated Food Security Phase Classification level 3 for October to December 2019.

**Read the whole story on our website at**

<https://pwrdf.org/pwrdf-foodgrains-bank-and-zimbabwepartner-support-agricultural-recovery/>