

Prayers for Jamaica and the people in the Caribbean

Psalms 46 starts with these words:

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

Lord, we bring to you the people of Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti, the Bahamas and the other parts of the Caribbean that have been devastated by Hurricane Melissa. We think of the terrible loss of lives, and the extensive damage to houses, hospitals, schools, churches, shops, and critical infrastructure such as electricity, gas, water and the internet.

We particularly consider the people of Jamaica, as so many people on these shores have friends and family on that island.

We pray for the international aid effort, that the countries of the world will join with the Jamaican people in the work to get assistance in the form of food, clothing and shelter to those who are most in need of this.

We pray for the politicians in Jamaica, and ask that all political differences may be put aside as they work together to get the country back on its feet.

Give them wisdom, resolve and a real sense of purpose, and we pray that they may be committed to 'building back better', especially in those areas that were previously neglected, and adversely affected by Hurricane Melissa.

We pray for the Jamaican people, who are a faithful and resilient population that have had to endure a range of hardships over the years, especially in the form of hurricanes such as 'Hugo', 'Gilbert' and 'Ivan'.

We pray that they may pull together in such a time of crisis, firm in the belief that they are their brothers' and sisters' keepers.

We thank you for the Church in Jamaica, an island that has more churches per square mile than anywhere else in the western world.

We recognise that many churches were damaged by the hurricane, which means that a lot of Christians won't be able to worship in their churches. Again, we pray for the relief effort, and ask that the necessary repairs take place to help believers return to their places of worship.

We thank you for the news and social media outlets that have kept us aware of the full nature of the devastation, and we ask that they do not move onto other stories, but continue to report on what is happening in Jamaica, as the full extent of the destruction is only now becoming evident.

We consider all those on these shores who have loved ones in Jamaica, whose plight they may still not be aware of. We ask that all may receive positive news about loved ones, and will be able to speak to them, and even see them via social media platforms.

We thank you for the Jamaican diaspora in various parts of the world, and thank you for numerous fundraising and aid-related efforts that have sprung into place since the hurricane.

We ask that people give generously to help their Jamaican brothers and sisters.

Finally, we consider the reality of climate change which continues to warm the world's oceans and seas, resulting in even more powerful hurricanes such as Melissa. It is a cruel irony, and reality, that those who are the least responsible for global warming tend to be the most affected by it.

Let us pray that the world's leaders, especially in the leading polluting countries, take the climate crisis seriously, and put into place measures that limit its impact.

This we ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Richard Reddie, Director of Justice and Inclusion, CTBI

*Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®
Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc. TM
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*