

Dear Deidre,

Many thanks for your email this morning.

I returned from a UN SDG forum in Nadi yesterday and straight into final preparations at home for the cyclone.

At the risk of information overload, here is an overview of what we are expecting in Fiji:

Severe Tropical Cyclone Yasa remains at Cat 5 and continues to track towards us bringing destructive winds, storm surges and swells in coastal areas of at least 10metres in height - probably more , and heavy rain and flooding.

The cyclone is coming in from the West and so will severely damage the Yasawa and Mamanuca island groups which are already struggling because of the collapse of the tourism industry. It is currently tracking to go between the two main islands and then down through the middle of the group. This is a huge system so Suva will take a bigger hit than in 2016 with Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston, and as you know, the many squatter and informal settlements in the greater Suva area have very ill-constructed homes so this is a major worry.

Yet our faith, our traditional knowledge and wisdom and experiences of the past keep us resilient. We have been expecting this weather since the early and abundant breadfruit season and prolonged mango season ( see how God through His creation speaks to us and provides for us).

Thank you for keeping us in prayers. It will be a tough Christmas. We really need to shift gear on Climate Change as these are all climate change induced extreme weather events. When we talk about loss and damage in climate negotiations - this is part of it.

At times like this I question your government's commitment to their Pacific family. How much of the support that will flow in after this cyclone in terms of relief is to their "Vuvale" Pacific Partnership and how much is a guilt offering on their failure to be the world leader they could be on climate change.

It breaks my heart that the Pacific Church Partnership of DFAT will engage on many things but we are not able to leverage it on the urgent matter of climate change. Nevertheless we will remain the persistent widow until things change.

Our love to you , Lawrie and the family as well as our sisters and brothers in UCA,

*In Peace,*  
**James**

*Simplicity, Serenity, Spontaneity*

**Rev. James Bhagwan**  
**General Secretary,**  
**Pacific Conference of Churches**  
**Secretariat: 4 Thurston Street, Suva, FIJI**  
**Phone: (679) 3311277      Fax: (679)3303205**  
P.O. Box 208, Suva, FIJI

---

On Thu, Dec 17, 2020 at 8:02 AM President <[president@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:president@nat.uca.org.au)> wrote:

Dear James,

Greetings from the Uniting Church.

We are watching the news about Cyclone Yasa, with alarm and deep concern for you and our friends and partners in Fiji.

How are you? And what is happening where you are?

You are very much on our hearts and in our prayers.

Yours in Christ,

**Dr Deidre Palmer**

President

Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

Lvl 4 262 Pitt St Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box A2266 Sydney South NSW 1235