



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you.

Last weekend we witnessed the severe impact of storms across Northwest Minnesota, and especially in Beltrami County, where a State of Emergency has been declared.

I have been in close contact with Father David Blume, Pastor of St. Philip's Church, Bemidji, since Saturday and I had the opportunity to visit the area and survey some of the damage myself on Monday. It was devastating to see so many trees down, often seriously damaging homes. As of this writing many are still without power.

I wish to commend the first responders, emergency personnel, and volunteers who have shown great courage and compassion in responding to the needs of communities. They have been immediately responsive and are the hands and feet of Christ in this moment of need. I am grateful for the way the community of St. Philip's and others are joining together to help those most affected.

I ask the whole diocese to pray for safety, for strength in the face of trial, and for the comfort of God's loving presence amid this hardship. Let us ask God for healing for those who are hurting and for hope for those who have experienced loss. As St. Paul reminds us in these circumstances we must "Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer" (Romans 12:12).

With heartfelt prayers and the assurance of my ongoing support,

Sincerely In Christ,

The Most Rev. Andrew H. Cozzens, S.T.D., D.D.
Bishop of Crookston