



# United Church of God

## *an International Association*

Donald L. Ward  
Chairman

Victor Kubik  
President

September 14, 2018

Dear brethren,

As we are now into the last half of God's annual festival season, I would encourage everyone to pray for the safety and peace of all members of the body of Christ—wherever they may be.

As I write this on Friday morning, September 14, Hurricane Florence's eye-wall has reached the North Carolina coast. Catastrophic flash flooding is hammering the Carolinas and Appalachia today. Millions of people far inland will be affected. Already more than a million residents evacuated before the arrival of what is expected to be historically destructive damage in the Carolinas and Virginia. Major manufacturers like Boeing and Mercedes closed their plants, and the U.S. Navy issued a sortie order, sending nearly 30 warships out to sea from their Hampton Roads, Virginia, harbor to weather the hurricane.

While the United States is blessed with considerable resources to deal with storms of this magnitude, other nations are not so fortunate. On the other side of the world, Super Typhoon Mangkhut (the equivalent of a category 5 hurricane), a larger storm than Florence, is expected to hammer the northern Philippines by Friday. We remember super typhoon Haiyon that hit the Philippines in 2013, which killed more than 6,000 people. Several of our member's homes were totally destroyed at that time (see [www.lifenets.org/typhoon2013](http://www.lifenets.org/typhoon2013)). The current storm is expected to cross the South China Sea and smash into China and Hong Kong by Sunday, where we have a Feast site.

We do not need to be reminded that we live on a planet that is hurting. As Paul wrote in Romans: "For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:22-23). Yes, our brethren are also hurting with trials and sicknesses.

At the Feast we are going to be celebrating a new world and a new attitude. Please take the opportunity to make this Feast of Tabernacles a catalyst that will make a difference in your life and how you affect others. We will learn about that in festival sermons and by living the experience of the new world and its new spirit.

That spirit needs to be extended to those around us. Paul also wrote about our relationships and mutual care and respect that we must show one towards another. "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be

kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

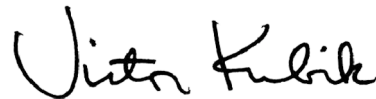
We have so much to be thankful for. Every day we experience positive outcomes in the Church, for which I praise God. Yesterday I spoke to our Ambassador Bible College class at a student assembly, and I was impressed with this class of young, serious-minded students who are intensively studying the Bible and who want to make a difference in the congregations they will return to and serve.

So, have a wonderful Feast! Again, I ask that you pray for the safety of all our brethren travelling to the more than 65 sites around the world. And, please don't forget to pray for those who are needing to stay home because they cannot travel the distances they once did.

As we read in the 91<sup>st</sup> Psalm, let us be reminded of the divine promise of safety for those who seek refuge in God, and let us all join in prayers for peace and safety of all members of the Body of Christ, especially now in this High Holy Day season.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victor Kubik". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Victor" and last name "Kubik" clearly distinguishable.

Victor Kubik