



16 Days of Activism



**STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**



*"Tamar and the Global
Struggle Against
Gender-Based Violence."*

LETTER FROM BISHOP BRIAN

Dear Beloved Faithful,

Re: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

I greet you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of peace and justice.

I am writing to commend to you this 16 Days of Activism resource that includes a profound article by Reverend Polly Falconer titled "Tamar and the Global Struggle Against Gender-Based Violence." In this powerful reflection, Reverend Falconer draws upon the ancient story of Tamar to illuminate the modern realities of gender-based violence. Her insights challenge us to confront the injustices that persist within our communities and to engage in meaningful dialogue about these critical issues.

As we reflect on Reverend Falconer's words, I encourage you to consider the reflection and personal engagement questions provided alongside her article. These questions are designed to deepen our understanding and inspire action. They remind us that the journey towards justice and healing is not one we walk alone; rather, it is a collective effort that requires our courage, compassion, and commitment.

We also thank our Diocesan Safe and Inclusive Church Chairperson, Brig. Thabo Moeng and Mr Kagiso Phelwane who is an inmate, for their insightful inputs. Furthermore, we thank Ms Resegofetse Molale, a lay minister and member of Mothers' Union, Revd. Mpho Chaane, Interim Rector at the Parish Church of the Resurrection and Chaplain in the North West Correctional Services, and Ms Ontse Tong a Safeguarding Champion and Member of the Guild of St Mary Magdalene for their powerful prayers.

Considering the upcoming 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, I call upon each of you to actively participate in the activities organized within our Diocese. This is an opportunity for us to stand in solidarity with survivors, raise awareness, and advocate for systemic change. Let us not only hear the cries of the marginalized but also acts to ensure their voices are heard and their dignity upheld.

I urge you to engage in the discussions, attend the events, and support initiatives that will help to educate our congregations and the wider community about the impact of gender-based violence. Together, let us work towards creating a safer and more just society for all. May we be guided by our faith as we strive to be instruments of peace and advocates for those who suffer in silence.

In Christ's love and service,

+ Brian Kwisibeky & Kuruman



Together
WE CAN



Tamar and the Global Struggle Against Gender-Based Violence (Sacred Texts, Secular Wounds)

Introduction

Tamar was the daughter of King David and sister to Absalom. Her half-brother Amnon, also a son of David, became infatuated with her. One day, Amnon pretended to be ill and asked Tamar to care for him. When she went to help, he sexually assaulted her. Amnon then rejected her adding to her grief and humiliation. Devastated after the abuse, Tamar went to live in Absalom's house. Although he was angry, King David did not punish Amnon. Two years later, Absalom took revenge by having Amnon killed (2 Samuel 13).

The story of Tamar is a story of abuse, betrayal, and injustice. Like many of the 'hard texts' in the Bible, we rarely hear it read. It's not surprising, given the emotive nature of the topic, and yet it is still relevant today. The story of Tamar provides a platform on which we as Christians can open discussions on gender-based violence. This abuse of power still exists, with many, predominantly women, living in fear and wondering each morning if they will make it through the day. Following the trauma and violation, Tamar was able to leave, moving to stay with her brother Absalom, a place of safety. Although she was able to remove herself from further abuse, she could not have removed the trauma, the feelings of shame and the scars they would leave. Today, many victims endure gender-based violence because they are not aware of any place of safety. Tamar had no children and therefore had only herself to consider.

Power, Patriarchy, and Silence

Women are vulnerable in a patriarchal society where men hold the power. Some believe that, as providers, they are entitled to do what they want. They use this power to manipulate and abuse those close to them. They then transfer the blame, making the victim believe that they had caused the situation. For example. 'If you hadn't visited your father, I wouldn't have had to wait for my dinner'. Their self-interest disregards any relevant facts. In this case, her father was sick.

I wonder then, did Amnon believe that Tamar was to blame in some way because she was beautiful?

The fear of attack and the possibility of a child getting hurt as a result, takes away the power for many women. Even the strongest woman becomes vulnerable because of gender-based violence. The instinct to attempt to keep the peace so that your children are safe, gives the abuser even more power, as does the shame that creates your silence. I prayed day and night for it to stop and for my children to be safe. I even reminded God that he promised not to give me more trials than I could bear. I isolated myself as much as possible, but I had to go to work and visit family occasionally. Those around me saw a change in me, but my bruises were covered, my dresses and sleeves longer, and my necklines higher. Suddenly, I wore make-up.



Justice Denied

Many perpetrators go unpunished. It is difficult to get a conviction. Victims relive it all, only to find that the abuser walks away, often to hurt someone else. Tamar's brother Absalom had Amnon killed because their father the king, although angry, did nothing to punish Amnon. As victims, we want justice in a way that protects others from enduring gender-based violence. We also want education programmes that teaches our young people about the long-term effects of gender-based violence, asking questions like 'what if your mother or your sister was experiencing this?'

A mother saw that her son had broken his girlfriend's arm in an argument, she drove him 25 miles to where his 7-year-old daughter lived with her mother. She stood the child in front of him and said, 'how would you feel if someone did it to your daughter?'. He became an activist against gender-based violence. Not everyone can take such an approach. For her however, it was the only way that she thought her son would change.

The Trauma of Gender-Based Violence

Like Tamar, victims of gender-based violence suffer emotional and social devastation. The lack of understanding of the issues add to the trauma. 'Why didn't you just leave?' was what they asked me.

In my head I answered, 'but where would I go?'. If my brothers knew, they would end up in jail. I had to protect them too. I was grateful that my children gave me the strength to keep going, and I knew that God was with me. However, my sense of self worth needed to be rebuilt. For many, the emotional healing takes several years. Their mental health remains affected, and relationships are forever a challenge. The stigma of gender-based violence and the impact on mental health lives on. gender-based violence is still a cultural taboo, causing many to suffer in silence.

Faith, Scripture, and Advocacy

As stated earlier, we rarely hear the story of Tamar, however, it can be used in our communities to highlight that gender-based violence is not a modern-day issue. It could perhaps be used as a Bible study to consider a Christlike response to gender-based violence and the safeguarding issues it raises. As a Church, there is a potential to provide faith-based spaces to support survivors and raise awareness.

Conclusion

As a faith community, Tamar's story can be used as a call to action. We can bridge the gap between the biblical text and modern activism. As a survivor, I would like the Church to lead the way in encouraging education, empathy, and a systemic change that removes the silence around gender-based violence, enabling survivors to tell their stories, and become a part of the change we want to see.



Remember
YOU ARE NEVER ALONE.
Never forget
THAT YOU ARE  LOVED.
Never doubt
THAT SOMEONE SURELY
CARES FOR YOU.

THOMAS S. MONSON



Reflection Questions

1. Understanding Tamar's Story: How does Tamar's experience resonate with modern issues of gender-based violence? What parallels can you draw between her story and contemporary situations?
2. Impact of Patriarchy: In what ways does the patriarchal structure described in Tamar's story manifest in today's society? Can you identify any personal experiences or observations that reflect this?
3. Silence and Shame: What are the societal factors that contribute to the silence surrounding gender-based violence? How can we work to break this silence within our communities?
4. Justice and Accountability: Reflect on the theme of justice denied in Tamar's narrative. How do you believe communities can better support victims and hold perpetrators accountable?
5. Emotional Healing: Consider the emotional and mental health impacts outlined in the text. What steps can individuals and communities take to support survivors in their healing journey?
6. Faith and Activism: How can faith communities play a role in addressing gender-based violence? What actions can your community take to create a supportive environment for survivors?
7. Education and Awareness: What educational initiatives do you believe are essential in preventing gender-based violence? How can young people be effectively engaged in these discussions?

Personal Engagement Questions

1. Personal Reflection: Have you ever witnessed or experienced gender-based violence, directly or indirectly? How did it affect you or those around you?
2. Role of Bystanders: If you witnessed an act of gender-based violence, how would you respond? What factors would influence your decision to intervene?
3. Advocacy: What steps can you personally take to advocate for survivors of gender-based violence in your community? How can you raise awareness about this issue?
4. Community Resources: Are you aware of local organizations or resources that support survivors? How can you contribute to or partner with these organizations?
5. Personal Growth: What lessons have you learned about resilience and strength from stories like Tamar's? How can you apply these lessons in your own life?
6. Faith in Action: How can your faith guide your actions regarding social justice issues, particularly gender-based violence? What does it mean to embody a Christlike response in this context?

These questions encourage deep reflection and personal engagement with the themes presented in Tamar's story, fostering a meaningful dialogue about gender-based violence and its implications today.



PRAYERS

Heavenly Father,
as we begin this period of activism against gender-based violence,
we lift up to you all whose lives are affected by abuse and trauma.

We pray that with your healing hand placed upon them;
they will find courage, peace and hope for the future.

We pray also that the perpetrators will see the error of their ways
and will step from the darkness into light.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen

- Revd Polly Falconer

Tamar: Resilience in the Face of Adversity [Genesis 38; 2 Samuel 13]

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come before you, seeking guidance and solace through the story of Tamar.
Like Tamar, I face trials and hardships in my life, and I look to her example for strength and faith.

Just as Tamar showed resilience in the face of adversity, help me to remain steadfast in my faith, even when circumstances seem insurmountable.

Grant me the wisdom to discern the right path when I am confronted with difficult choices, just as Tamar did.

Lord, I ask for your protection and provision, knowing that you are a God who sees the injustices I may face, just as you saw Tamar's suffering.

May I find comfort in the knowledge that you are always with me, guiding me through the darkest of times.

May I also learn from Tamar's courage to speak up for justice and to seek the truth. Give me the courage to stand up against injustice and to support those who are marginalized and oppressed.

In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

~ Bishop Brian: Mary the Untier of Knots: Journeying through Prayer with Women in the Bible



16 Days of No Violence against Women and Children

Theme (SA): "Renewed Efforts and Sustainable Commitments to End AIDS", the Global theme is "Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response"

Days commemorated during the 16 Days of No Violence

25 November: International Day of No Violence against Women

01 December: World AIDS Day

03 December: International Day for Persons with Disabilities

10 December: International Human Rights Day

4 GBV Guiding Principles

- Safety
- Confidentiality
- Non-discrimination
- Respect

6 Pillars of Gender Based Violence in South Africa

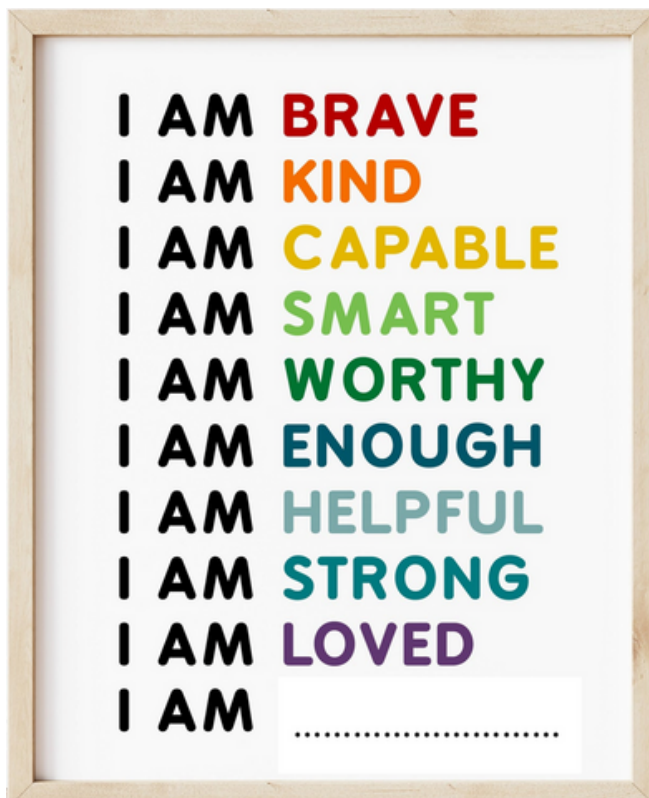
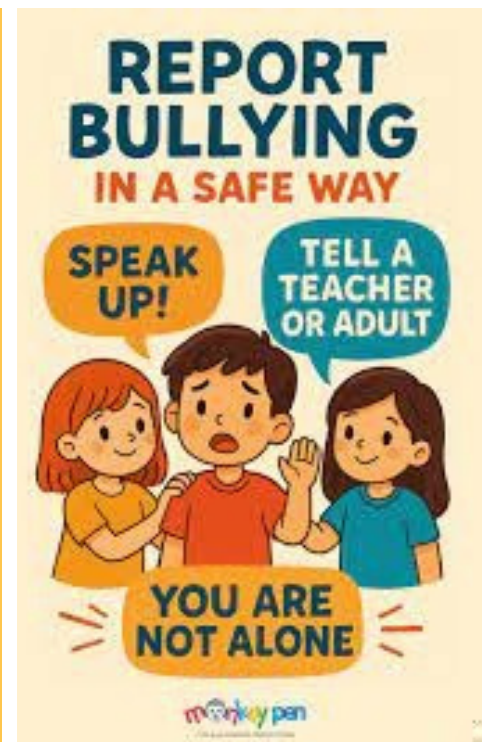
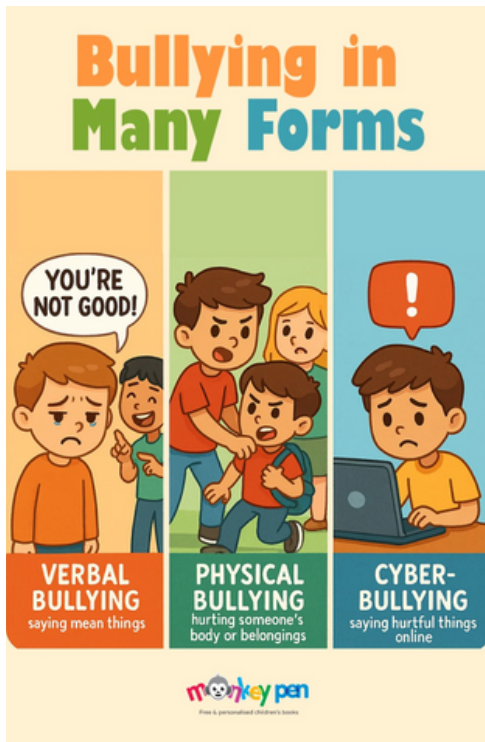
- Accountability
- Prevention
- Justice
- Response
- Economic Empowerment and
- Research



"Unless men are active allies, we'll never end violence against women and girls."
~ Eve Ensler



BULLYING



BE THE CHANGE - CREATE VIOLENCE FREE SOCIETIES

Somewhere, somehow in this country of ours, someone is being emotionally, psychologically, physically, sexually and or financially abused. Women and children, the worst affected, the element of brutality manifested in rape and femicide cases.

Gender based violence is a societal issue because perpetrators are in families or our neighborhood. Men are expected to provide and protect women and children, but it seems that men are becoming the enemy. The question is, who protects the men who are going through the daily hardships of poverty and unemployment, who are drowning in alcohol and self-pity? What about those who are called losers and therefore cannot provide?

Men are taught to suppress their emotions, if they can't, then they are called weak. Bottled-up emotions are very dangerous because when they explode, the fragments of anger and frustration hurt the most vulnerable, women and children.

There is no excuse in beating, raping, killing and abusing women and children. It is very important to teach boy children to express their emotions in a healthy way; they have the right to be heard and understood.

The world is changing, and we all need to change with it and create violence free society where men and women, girls and boys live together in peace and harmony.

~Kagiso Phelwane - Inmate

PRAYER

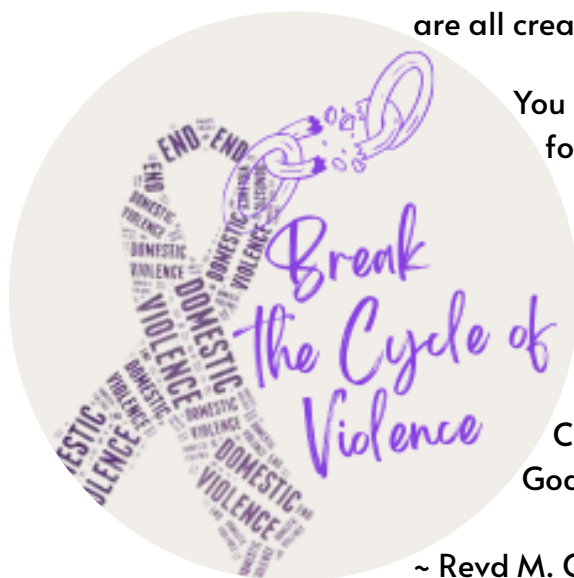
Almighty God, the Father of all creation and goodness. Thank you that we are all created in your image and likeness, both male and female.

You created us to compliment each other and to work together for the betterment of the world.

We pray for perpetrators of GBVF that their conscience remind them of your love and care so they, too, love others and care for them.

We ask all this in the wonderful name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God now and forever. Amen

~ Revd M. Chaane: Interim Rector at the Parish Church of the Resurrection and Chaplain: North West Correctional Service



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH – BRIG. TK MAHOMED, DIOCESAN SAFE AND INCLUSIVE CHURCH CHAIRPERSON

It is said church is a safe space...a place where we seek God's protection and guidance. Those who come to church are from homes where secrets are lurking. Secrets wrapped in silence, shame, and fear. Homes whose walls are meant to shield and protect us yet are riddled with Gender-Based violence and femicide (GBVF).

GBVF refers to violence towards a person because of their gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.

Femicide is the killing of a female person, often by an intimate partner or family member.

GBVF — is not just a term. It's a daily reality. It's the bruises hidden under long sleeves. It's the girl who stops coming to school. It's the woman who never speaks again. GBVF is physical abuse, sexual assault, emotional manipulation, economic control, and human trafficking. It is the theft of dignity, safety, and life itself.

The Social Impact

GBVF doesn't just hurt individuals — it poisons entire communities. It teaches boys that violence is power and girls that silence is survival. It breaks families, fuels cycles of abuse, and normalises fear.

When we allow GBVF to continue, we are saying that some lives matter less. That some screams can be ignored. That some pain is acceptable. But it's not.

The wounds of GBVF go far beyond the body. Survivors often live with depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which once used to be found in military veterans indicative of the harsh effects of violence.

Those affected and effected by GBVF lose trust — in people, in systems, in themselves. Some never feel safe again. Some never speak again.

Women who are abused often lose their jobs, their homes, their independence. They stay in violent relationships because they have nowhere else to go.

Economic abuse is real. It's when a woman is denied access to money, forced to beg for basic needs, or told she's worthless without a man. It's when a girl is told not to dream too big, because "no one wants a wife who's too educated."

The Church's response

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa has established a dedicated Safe and Inclusive Church Commission to implement. Key actions include:

- Bishops signing a charter committing to these principles.
- Mandating that every parish appoint a Safe Church Officer.
- Requiring all churchwardens, parish councillors, and ministers to sign a Safe and Inclusive Church Declaration.
- Providing online training on safe church competencies.



These measures are a practical expression of the Gospel, aiming to prevent harm and ensure the church is a safe home for all people.

Safeguarding is a phenomenon implemented by the church to protect its members, particularly vulnerable individuals such as children, young people, and adults with care and support needs.

The Pillars of SAIC are:

1. Culture of safety and inclusivity
2. Effective response to abuse
3. Pastoral support where there is abuse
4. Practice of Pastoral ministry
5. Suitability for Ministry



Key types of safeguarding in the church:

1. Pastoral Care: Providing spiritual, emotional, and practical support to church members in need.
2. Pastoral Plus: Offering additional support to individuals or families in times of greater need or crisis.
3. Care and Protection: Collaborating with external specialist services to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals.

Safeguarding measures are implemented to guard against types of Abuse such as

1. Physical Abuse: Physical harm or injury.
2. Domestic Violence or Abuse: Abuse within intimate relationships.
3. Sexual Abuse: Unwanted or coerced sexual behaviour.
4. Psychological or Emotional Abuse: Emotional harm or distress.
5. Financial or Material Abuse: Exploitation or misuse of financial resources.
6. Modern Slavery: Human trafficking or exploitation.
7. Spiritual Abuse: Misuse of spiritual authority or power to control or manipulate individuals.
8. Discriminatory Abuse: Abuse based on prejudice or discrimination.
9. Neglect or Acts of Omission: Failure to provide necessary care or support.

What Can We Do?

We must teach our children — boys and girls — that love is not control. That “no” means no. That respect is not optional. We must empower girls with education, with opportunities, with the courage to walk away from abuse and the support to never walk alone

We must challenge the systems that protect abusers and silence survivors. We must demand equal pay, equal rights, and equal safety.



We must stop telling girls to be careful — and start teaching boys to be kind.
We must create safe spaces in our churches, schools, our homes, and our communities. We must train our teachers, our police officers, our leaders — to listen, to believe, and to act.

Call to Action

From the Safe and Inclusive Church Ministry of the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman this is a call to all in our Diocese to be the voice for every child who has been silenced; to be the strength for every woman who has been broken, for affected families. We urge parishes to take an active role in ensuring safety and inclusivity in our parishes and even communities, remembering that women are the backbone of most families and children are the future of our church and country.

Let us be proactive, learn about GBVF, Safe and Inclusive Church, share information, empower each and take meaningful action by speaking out, reporting incidents and having awareness events. Let us not wait for yet another statistic; let us not wait for another name to become a hashtag. Let us not wait for someone else to fix this.

Let us all stand for the vulnerable members of our church, our elderly, our children our disabled our marginalized. Let us make it 365 Days of Activism in our homes, communities, churches and organisations.

My church is a SAFE place!



Theme: "Renewed Efforts and Sustainable Commitments to End AIDS", while the global theme is "Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response".



World AIDS Day is commemorated each year on the 1st of December and is an opportunity for every community to unite in the fight against HIV, show support for people living with HIV and remember those who have died.

This year's campaigns focuses on advancing actions to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, addressing issues of stigmatisation, raising awareness about the importance of screening, testing, treatment retention, prevention and also highlighting the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on HIV, STI and TB.



"Many people suffering from AIDS and not killed by the disease itself are killed by the stigma surrounding everybody who has HIV and AIDS."
-Nelson Mandela



Theme 2025 (UN): Fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress

Across all regions, persons with disabilities and their households face challenges and barriers in the attainment of social development objectives:

- They are more likely to live in poverty;
- They continue to face discrimination in employment, receiving lower wages and being overrepresented in the informal sector;
- Social protection systems are uneven in coverage and inadequate when considering extra disability-related costs, frequently excluding persons with disabilities in the informal sector; and,

Types of Disabilities

- ~ Visual
- ~ Hearing
- ~ Learning
- ~ Autism
- ~ Physical
- ~ Emotional
- ~ Cognitive

Did you know?

- ~ An estimated 1.3 billion people experience significant disability. This represents 16% of the world's population, or 1 in 6 of us.
- ~ Some persons with disabilities die up to 20 years earlier than those without disabilities.
- ~ Persons with disabilities have twice the risk of developing conditions such as depression, asthma, diabetes, stroke, obesity or poor oral health.
- ~ Health inequities arise from unfair conditions faced by persons with disabilities, including stigma, discrimination, poverty, exclusion from education and employment, and barriers faced in the health system itself.

As the church of God, we are urged to ensure Acceptance, Equality Inclusion and empower of people living with disabilities in our Parishes. Let us adhere to the standards set that we have ramps at the entrances of our churches. Ensure that where possible, we have sign language interpreters, audio and overall inclusion, even with people with disabilities sit in our churches. Five rights of persons with disabilities are the right to non-discrimination and equality, the right to accessibility, the right to education, the right to work, and the right to live independently and participate in society. These rights are outlined in documents like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and are protected by national laws to ensure persons with disabilities can enjoy the same rights as everyone else.



PRAYER FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

Gracious Father,

We bring before You all Your people — children, persons with disabilities, and every individual whose human rights must be honored.

Protect our children and grant them safety, healing, and nurturing care.
Empower those living with disabilities with strength, honor, and opportunities. Help us as a society to remove barriers and to recognize their beauty, purpose, and God-given gifts.
Grant our leaders and communities' wisdom and compassion to uphold justice, equality, and the dignity of every human being.

Guide our nation during these 16 Days of Activism and beyond, so that love may overcome violence and Your light may break through every darkness.
In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.

~ Ms Resegofetse Molale - Lay Minister and MU Member: Parish of St Timothy's, Seoding

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

2025 Theme (UN) – Human Rights, Our Everyday Essentials



Human Rights Day is observed annually around the world on 10 December. It commemorates the anniversary of one of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This

landmark document enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being – regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 and sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

In this period of turbulence and unpredictability, where many feel a growing sense of insecurity, disaffection and alienation, the theme of Human Rights Day is to reaffirm the values of human rights and show that they remain a winning proposition for humanity. Through this campaign, we aim to re-engage people with human rights by showing how they shape our daily lives, often in ways we may not always notice. Too often taken for granted or seen as abstract ideas, human rights are the essentials we rely on every day.

By bridging the gap between human rights principles and everyday experiences, we aim to spark awareness, inspire confidence and encourage collective action.

The campaign emphasizes that human rights are positive, essential and attainable.



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

FOR NO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN



INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR THE ELIMINATION
OF VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN
25 NOVEMBER



Standing Together Against Domestic Violence



Faith ACTION
for Gender-Based Violence Campaign

HOPE AFRICA

WE WILL SPEAK OUT SA
FAITH COMMUNITIES ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Red Chair Campaign



CALL TO ACTION!

Place a red chair, mat or prayer rug prominently in your faith institution or workplace during the 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM.

This is a painful reminder of women killed by abusive partners and a call to say: not on our watch.

Make crisis contacts and information available.

JOIN THIS CAMPAIGN and share with others. Download here:







Prayer for Women and Children

Heavenly Father,

We lift before you everyone seeking safety, healing and strength.

Cover them with Your protection and restore every place wounded by fear or violence.

Grant them courage, dignity, and hope. Break every cycle of abuse and surround them with people who will uplift, defend and love them.

Guide us as a community to stand against all injustice and to be instruments of Your peace and compassion.

Lord, let Your light heal, Your justice protect, and Your love renew every heart.

In Jesus' name. Amen



Sources:

www.anglicansa.org

Shepherds of the flock

www.gov.za/news/health

sanac.org.za

www.gbvf.org.za

www.un.org