

**Address by Her Worship, the Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality, Cllr Nkakareng Rakgoale on the occasion of the District Day of Prayer at Giyani Community Hall, Greater Giyani Municipality on Thursday, 06 December 2018.**

**Programme Director;**

**Mayor of the Greater Giyani Municipality, Cllr Sasavona Mathebula;**

**Speakers and Chief Whips present here;**

**Members of the Mayoral Committee of the Mopani District Municipality**

**All Councillors from the District and Local Municipalities;**

**Our Bishops, Pastors and all Servants of the Lord present here;**

**Special greetings to Dr Elijah Maswanganyi, our Guest Speaker for the day;**

**Traditional leaders;**

**Officials from our Municipalities and Sector Departments;**

**Members of the Media**

Let me greet you in the name of the living God

Allow me to start by expressing my deep appreciation for your positive response to the invitation to this District Day of Prayer. I also want to acknowledge the work done by our pastors in all our five local municipalities in support of this initiative.

It is not by mistake that I chose to greet you by the name of the living God. I do so because, I have seen the miraculous work of this living God that we

serve. I have also come to the realization just like Dr Tumi, in his song titled: “Nothing Without You”, that we all are nothing without Him.

I’ve been given a responsibility to lead the Mopani District Municipality in the position of the Executive Mayor, but I’m nothing without Him. The pastors that are here today are not without limitations, in fact, they are also nothing without Him. Only the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that has no limitations. No challenges are unsurmountable to Him.

Programme director

The drought that we are currently experiencing in the Mopani District Municipal area has prompted our special Council Sitting held on the 13th of November 2018, to approve the imposing of water restrictions across the five local municipalities. Dam levels across the district are very low, and council expressed concern that if the drought persist, our people may soon run out of drinking water.

The levels at ten of our major dams are significantly lower as compared to the same period last year. The percentage at most of our dams is between 6 and 28 percent. Not far from here, we have Middle Letaba Dam which is at 6.9 percent and Nsami Dam at 26 percent low.

We have already stopped abstracting water from the Thapane Dam in Bolobedu South and Modjadji Dam in Greater Letaba Municipality.

The Tzaneen Dam which supplies water to a number of communities has also dropped to about 16 percent. This is an indication that, as a District Municipality we are already sitting on a time bomb waiting to explode.

Program Director

Experts tells us that as and when we do not get sufficient rainfall, underground water levels are also dropping, hence some of our boreholes have stopped pumping water. In some instances, when our contractors drill boreholes we are just not getting water underground due to drought.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our main worry is that the South African Weather Services predict that we will only receive good rain in February next year. As the political leadership, pastors, ordinary members of the public and community leaders we must just bow down and ask God to open the flood gates of heaven to shower us and also capacitate our water sources. We are beginning to realise that the fact that government has declared our District Municipal area as disaster stricken zone, is not just enough. We have received a drought relief fund from the national government to drill additional boreholes and also equip those that are dysfunctional due to theft and vandalism. The funding may not be enough to keep the taps flowing.

I present this figures knowing very well that the living God will not forsake us. I have previously seen God performing miracles. After meeting in Nkowankowa for the District Day of Prayer last year, we declared in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ of Nazareth that rain shall fall down within seven days, and rain indeed came down peacefully until some of our dams were filled capacity.

Mopani District, just needs divine intervention, as the problems that we are currently experiencing are not manmade.

We just need the Holy Spirit to start moving in our district. I want to quote a scripture of Romans chapter 8 verse 28 which reads as follows. **“And we know**

**that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”**

What am picking from this scripture is that we are all called to this venue for a purpose. We are called to come and pray asking for God’s divine intervention. An intervention which will see our rivers and dams overflowing again.

We must have the faith of Elijah who when his servant reported to him that he saw a little cloud about the size of a man’s hand rising from the sea, he shouted to his servant: **“Hurry to Ahab and tell him, climb into your chariot and go back home. If you don’t hurry, the rain will stop!”**

Even when we look outside and see no cloud, we still believe that rain is coming in the name of the living God.

Programme director

I am deeply worried about the cases of abuse on women and children. At the beginning of last month, a six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 68-year-old neighbour in Greater Tzaneen in the Maake area. It is reported that the suspect bought her silence with a packet of chips.

We also heard earlier this week that police arrested a 36-year old man in connection with the brutal murder of his wife at Babanana village, also in the same Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

All of this is happening on the backdrop of our campaigns on No Violence Against Women and Children. It is now time to seek help from the living God. Our churches have an important role to play in responding to cases of sexual abuse and gender-based violence. Victims of abuse look for spiritual healing and comfort, and they should find such in the house of the Lord.

Through our collective efforts we can create safer communities, and we all must act to prevent abuse and to ensure a safer society for women and children.

Ladies and gentlemen

The 2019 general elections are fast approaching, and the IEC has announced dates for final registration weekend which is the 26th and 27th January year. We are therefore appealing to all eligible voters to go and register to vote in the upcoming national elections. Those of you who have not updated your addresses on the voters roll, must also do so. Elections are important in safeguarding our democracy. Many countries have collapsed in Africa because of wars and poor leadership.

The first democratic elections on 27 April 1994 gave birth to our constitutional democracy. For the majority of South Africans who had never voted before, their dignity was restored and the country transformed to a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. We can't undermine the significance of that breakthrough.

Let us use this opportunity to exercise our democratic right, which Madiba has spent years in jail fighting for. Many families lost bread winners to the struggle for liberation from the demonic apartheid regime. We must appreciate and defend with all our might the right to vote for our preferred leadership. But most importantly is that we must also pray for those in leadership.

The bible says in 1 Timothy Chapter 2, and I quote:

***“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live***

***peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our saviour.”***

The bible directs that we must pray for those in authority, and it's not a favour. Here it says praying for those in authority pleases the Almighty God. Let us take it upon ourselves to pray for our leaders.

We must pray for President Cyril Ramaphosa. We pray so that he may lead us well in this era of the new dawn. Let us pray that God may give him wisdom to continue to push back unemployment, poverty and equality.

We must pray for Premier Stanley Mathabatha and his Executive Council. Pray also for our leaders within our communities so that they may lead us well.

Programme Director

The festive season is upon us. President Cyril Ramaphosa has called on all South Africans to respond to the Thuma Mina call – to say “send me!”. Now, how do we respond to the Thuma Mina call during the festive season? We must respond by sharing with those who are less fortunate than us, particularly the orphans.

When we buy fancy groceries for our families, let us find it in our hearts to also buy the basics for our destitute neighbours. We must learn from the Lord Jesus Himself, who when God looked for someone to send to die for our sins, he raised his hand and said “send me. I will go and die for my people.”

Mopani needs selfless people who will emulate Christ.

I also want to urge all of us who will be travelling to various holiday destinations, to do so with caution. Let us obey the traffic rules at all times and ensure the safety of our loved ones and that of other road users.

In conclusion, programme director

Many of you will be leading January fasting prayers. I want to encourage you to continuously pray for these items, and pray for the unity of Mopani. I want to also take this opportunity to wish you a safe festive season.

May the floodgates of heaven open today. God bless you, and may God bless the people of Mopani.

Ke a leboga

Na khensa

Thank you