



Week of Compassion



October 5th, 2016

Hurricane Matthew Response

Week of Compassion and United Church of Christ's One Great Hour of Sharing working together to respond to Hurricane Matthew

Winds rush. Water pounds. Buildings fall. People hurt.

Situation in Haiti and the Caribbean

- Hurricane Matthew struck Western regions of Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, as a rare category 4 storm, on Tuesday morning.
- The strongest Atlantic storm since 2007, Hurricane Matthew is the worst humanitarian crisis in Haiti, since the 2010 earthquake.
- Early reports include 19 deaths and over 2,200 destroyed homes, with more expected as damage is assessed.

- Other reports include flooding, landslides, destroyed buildings, blocked roads, roofs flying off of buildings, and lost livestock.
- Cholera outbreaks are expected in the aftermath.

Developing Situation in Cuba, Bahamas, and US

- Early Wednesday morning, the storm passed through the poorest region of Cuba: Guantanamo.
- Cuba has experienced extensive damage, and several people in the Bahamas have perished.
- Now, Matthew is moving through the Bahamas and is expected to hit the Florida coast as a category 3 storm by Thursday morning.
- Matthew will be the strongest hurricane to hit the Florida coast in decades.
- Persons residing along the Florida, Georgia and Carolina coasts have been ordered to evacuate, and the local governments have declared a state of emergency.

Hurricane Matthew continues pounding the Caribbean and is making its way slowly towards the United States' mainland. It is expected to hit southern Florida around 8:00 a.m. local time on Thursday, October 6. Winds of 135 miles per hour have caused flash flooding, mud slides and violent winds. Devastation abounds.



Week of Compassion and One Great Hour of Sharing of the United Church of Christ are well situated to respond to people impacted both in the Caribbean and within the United States. Global Ministries' (UCC/Disciples joint ministry) partners are reporting devastation of crops and houses in the southern regions of Haiti. Houses in Ganthier, Haiti, rebuilt for families displaced from the 2010 earthquake by Church World Service (with whom the UCC and Disciples are partners), now are flooded again. Torrential downpours have sent water rushing down streets, creating fears of waterborne diseases like cholera, an epidemic already affecting those in Haiti prior to the hurricane.

Already, solidarity grants are on their way to partners in the region providing immediate needs, including food, shelter, and safety. The UCC and Disciples are also poised to respond with other churches to provide water, containers, roofs, mattresses, hygiene kits, and psychosocial support. Within the United States, both denominations are active in local and national disaster response networks.

Your generosity to this disaster appeal will enable our churches to expand these responses and to walk closely with our neighbors now, in the immediate crisis, and through the long-term recovery process that will follow.

To be part of the response, give to Week of Compassion at weekofcompassion.org/donate or PO Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206 and designate "Hurricane."

In the midst of tumultuous weather, people receive food and water to drink. In the midst of danger, people seek safety and comfort their neighbors. In the midst of hopelessness, people experience a love that will not let them go.

Week of Compassion and One Great Hour of Sharing will respond through our churches' Global Ministries and with the ACT Alliance through Church World Service, which is mobilizing a response in Haiti through the ACT Haiti Forum and the Cuban Council of Churches, as well as with domestic partners along the coast.

We're responding. YOU CAN HELP.



Pray for those affected by disasters and those who respond in the aftermath.

The below prayers were written by Karl Jones, a UCC Conference Disaster Coordinator.

1.

Something inside, so strong, pulls us, calls us:
Holy God, may we know your presence in the midst of tragedy.
Something terrible, almost unthinkable, has happened,
Shattering our sense of safety and security.
Something inside, so strong, steadies us, calms us;
A quiet confidence that we will make it through.

Even in the midst of crisis there is a growing faith that we are not alone;
A sense of God's present love and action.
Something inside, so strong, calls us to this place:
Something inside, so strong, causes us to sing and pray -
O God, come to my aid.
Hear my voice when I cry to you. Amen.

2.

God, our hope and trust are in you. We have nowhere else to turn. Be for us an anchor in the chaos. Hold out your hand so that we can find you and know which way to turn next.

O God, how could this tragedy happen? Grant us the faith to find you in the midst of it, even among our questions and disbelief. We bring to you our prayers and concerns. We pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.

3.

Show forth, O God, in power and peace what you have done and are doing in our world. Before some of us can sing a song of gladness again, O God, we have to get over something. Great earthquakes have occurred, causing us to question your story. We have a fear of your story, an estrangement from it. Some of us are angry. Some of us are hurt. And no one seems to notice. They keep telling us everything is going to be okay, but still we're hurt. Help us tell the truth without making people even more afraid. All some of us want is the day before we the quake. And we know we can't have any day back; we know that some days are just gone. And then comes Epiphany, the time when God is revealed. Reveal yourself, O God, to each one of us here. Bring us to your glory and help us move on to new days. In the name of Jesus, who is never far away. Amen.

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