



Upper New York Area of The United Methodist Church



Resident Bishop: Bishop Marcus Matthews

To live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

August 30, 2011

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The rains came down and the floods came up but the house of our Lord stands firm. As the waters recede, our neighbors need our help. Many homes have been destroyed and will need to be rebuilt; others will need repair.

I am appealing to the many generous members and congregations across the Upper New York Annual Conference to support the rebuilding that lies ahead. In the days and weeks ahead, you and your congregation can help in two significant ways:

1. **The greatest need is for funds for immediate relief and long-term recovery.** Cash is the most flexible and most easily transportable donation. It can be stored easily and does not spoil.

Send your donations to our UNYA Conference office, designating your gift to *fund #4200 (Upper New York Annual Conference Hurricane Recovery)*. Our focus will be helping our churches, communities and individuals after other resources are exhausted. You can also send cash donations to UMCOR for wider area needs. Designate ***US Disaster Response #901670*** on your check and send them through our Conference office. UMCOR contributions can also be made online at <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/?i=41307>

Please remember: **100 percent of all gifts made through our United Methodist Church are available for recovery work.**

Local churches may consider hosting flood-relief fundraisers, accepting special offerings or tithing a portion of an existing event. Some congregations have joined with other churches or businesses in their communities to work on creative ways to raise funds for flood relief.

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2. **The second great need is for Cleaning Buckets and Health Kits.** Rev. Carl Chamberlain, our Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, has requested a tractor-trailer load of Health Kits for immediate distribution through our partnership with The Salvation Army. We have assurance that the need is far beyond our supplies on hand.

We are asking churches to begin collecting the supplies and assembling Cleaning Buckets and Health Kits. Collection locations for these kits across our Conference will be announced next week. Directions for assembling the kits can be found at <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umcor/getconnected/supplies/>

Volunteers for rebuilding are not yet needed.

While many people want to respond immediately, there are few communities ready to receive teams at this early stage. Contact Greg Forrester, NEJ UMVIM coordinator, if you have a team ready to deploy. He will know those areas ready for volunteers or can help schedule work teams in the months ahead. Current UM-VIM Early Response Teams (ERTs) should contact Forrester for assignments. His office number is (607) 756-7799. You can also reach him by e-mail at umvimnej@twcny.rr.com

Rev. Chamberlain is in regular contact with UMCOR and our denominational partners in the Lutheran and Presbyterian churches. He is planning a coordinated effort for long-term recovery.

Our District Superintendents are assessing the damage to church properties across our Conference. If your church or parsonage has sustained damage, notify your DS and contact our insurance carrier, Walsh-Duffield, immediately. Contact information for our insurance carrier is on our Conference web page (www.unyumc.org). You may also contact our Walsh-Duffield agent Charmaine Derenda, directly at (716) 362-7336 or via e-mail at cdrenda@walshins.com.

Keep in prayer our neighbors whose lives are disrupted by Hurricane Irene and the associated flooding. Also remember the men and women who are serving others in need. Join us in prayer and service that we may all be safe in the hands of our Lord.

In Christ's Service,



Bishop Marcus Matthews
Upper New York Area Resident Bishop

Rev. Carl Chamberlain
Disaster Response Coordinator