



Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The Lehigh Conference of Churches is committed to responding to emerging needs in our community and finding ways to engage congregational leaders throughout the Lehigh Valley. Recently John Brown and Tom Muller, the county executives of Northampton and Lehigh counties, hosted a meeting of significant decision-makers to begin organizing and planning for Lehigh Valley's accommodation of Puerto Rican families migrating to the community because of the devastation of Hurricane Maria.

There are 64,000 people of Puerto Rican heritage in the Lehigh Valley. The people fleeing Puerto Rico following the devastation will be, and have already started, traveling to the Lehigh Valley to seek refuge with their families. Community groups are being asked to respond to many pressing needs, including transportation to appointments, winter clothing of all sizes, and interview-suitable attire for job seekers. Bilingual aids and problem-solving mentors are also being sought to guide our new neighbors to appropriate resources.

As faith-based communities and organizations, we will be asked to play a role, which at this point is not clear. To prepare, our goal is to develop a list of mission leaders and support people from your congregation so we will have a core group available to serve as family mentors, provide transportation, and perform other necessary tasks. As the needs come into greater focus, we will speak to you with greater clarity about specific ways you and your congregation can respond.

We ask that you to go to our website (LehighChurches.org) and click the **Estamos Listo** signup link. There, you can list the names and contact information for people who will serve as the primary contacts for your church or organization in these efforts. Your help will provide important support for families entering our region and needing a helping hand.

Thank you for your support.

In Hope,

Dr. Jack Felch
Executive Director

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