CHURCH WORLD SERVICE NEEDS OUR HELP

A recent call from the liaison officer at Church World Service revealed
that CWS is seeking the participation of at least one church in the Illinois Conference.

Here is the December 2025 letter to UCC national Disaster Coordinator Katharine Howe,
and Craig Hoffman, Program Assistant - Global HOPE.

From: Matthew Stevens, CWS

Hi Katie and Craig,

I hope you're both doing well as the year winds down.
Thank you so much for your partnership with CWS—especially your ongoing support of the CWS Kits program. The generosity of UCC congregations continues to inspire me. Even with all the challenges this year, together we were still able to get CWS Kits into the hands of people during their time of need. That's no small thing, and I'm truly grateful for the role you and your churches play in making that happen.

I'm reaching out because I could use your help—and your connections—as we look ahead to 2026. CWS is working to identify a few new CWS Kit Depots (local drop-off locations) to replace some long-time depots that won't be able to accept kits next year. We still have a strong base of kit donors in these areas, and having a convenient drop-off location is critical for keeping that momentum going.
Here are the key areas we're trying to address:

Elgin, IL / Chicago area
We'll need a replacement for the Elgin depot—either in Elgin or somewhere in the greater Chicago area. Ideally, this would be a year-round depot, *open at least one day a week during regular office hours. (ital - RCD)*

Rochester, NY
This remains a top priority, as Rochester collects a significant number of kits each year. Historically, this has been a spring-only collection site, open after Easter. We'd be open to expanding the dates if possible, but even maintaining it as a spring depot would be very helpful.

Florida
We're open to ideas here. We're now partnering with LIFT in Jacksonville to help organize shipments within the U.S., which gives us a real opportunity to grow the CWS Kits program in Florida. I'm happy to share more about what we're envisioning there when the time is right.

Here's a bit more information about what we look for in a Kits Depot, in case it's helpful as you think about possible connections:
https://cwskits.org/kit-depot-volunteers/

You both are so well connected, so I thought I'd ask. If it feels helpful, maybe we could meet early next year to talk this through. I'd be glad to drive to Cleveland, or we could just as easily meet virtually. I'll plan to touch base after the new year to see if that might work for you.

Wishing you and yours a Merry Christmas, and thanks again for all you do.
Warmly,
Matthew Stevens, CWS

In response to CWS' appeal, I seek at least one church in the Conference that is willing to serve as a collection site for response kits. Storage of kits would include both boxed kits and 5 gal. bucket kits stored in a fashion similar to this image:



This storage covers about 15 square feet of floor (3 ft X 5 ft)

CWS will arrange with FedEx (or similar) for all of the kits to be picked up and forwarded on a regular basis.

What we need: 50 to 100 square feet of easily accessible space that is clean, dry and won't freeze.

Are you that church?

Thank you for considering expanding your impact on the world!

Rev. Roger Dart
Conference Disaster Response Coordinator
Illinois Conference