Disaster Update, How to Help

Event: Hurricane Fiona- Puerto Rico

Event Date: September 18, 2022 (continuing as a category 4)

What Happened and Where: On Sunday, September 18, Hurricane Fiona hit Puerto Rico, causing power outages for millions of homes and businesses and life-threatening flooding across the island**.** Hurricane has left 35 inches of water on the entire island and practically devastated the progress of the electrical system, and the highway system especially in the southwest area. **Puerto Rico** has already received an emergency disaster declaration EM 3583; assessments are underway for affected persons. For updates on the Federal Declaration please monitor disasterassistance.gov

Impact to the UCC: UCC Global H.O.P.E. Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery and team are actively monitoring the hurricane response. In Puerto Rico there were impacts to former UCC church structures; and our partner congregants have family who were affected. Karen Georgia Thompson received notice from Rev. Edward Rivera-Santiago, Pastor General. He reported that they we are without electricity and water, and barely had enough to recharge phones. Their congregations across the island are receiving reports from members of their congregations of the damage. They had about twenty families who had lost everything or almost everything. They need to acquire at least four portable battery systems to be able to connect computers, charge phones and have access to communication with their members.

UCC in Early Response: Global H.O.P.E. is raising awareness of the needs and offering solidarity grant support. Disaster Ministries will continue to monitor emerging needs and engage in coordination calls through their state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (PRVOAD). In addition, Church World Service is conducting partner coordination calls for further coordination of resources.

UCC in Long-Term Recovery: Recovery from this hurricane will take years. Community centered and locally led Long-Term Recovery Groups were formed because of Hurricane Maria 5 years ago. We will look to assist these groups and their emotional and spiritual care needs as well as support the longer process of repairing and rebuilding homes. Long-term funding will be necessary as the United Church of Christ is a leader in helping communities organize for recovery, repair, and rebuild. Volunteers will also be needed, and churches should consider organizing teams to help in this process when they are needed and for the long haul, bringing hope and healing to devastated communities.

How to Help: How-you-can-help-Disaster-Survivors-2022
Join the Willing to Respond Network of Churches: Willing to Respond Preparedness Network
Assemble Kits and Clean Up Buckets: CWS Buckets and Kits | Help Communities in Need Around the World (cwskits.org)
Donate Emergency Funds-Designate to Emergency USA: Donate Now - United Church of Christ (ucc.org)
Sign up to Volunteer: https://support.ucc.org/volunteer-opportunity-form
Volunteer Opportunities: UCC Ministry Opportunities

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