

HELP IS NEEDED AS WE RESPOND TO RECENT DISASTERS

UCC Disaster Ministries responds to disasters through a network of Conference Disaster Coordinators. The Rev. Karl Jones serves in that position for both Penn Northeast Conference and PA Southeast Conference. He has been helping to coordinate our response to COVID-19 and Hurricane Isaias. Now there is a new event that requires our attention, love, and compassion.

Recently a derecho storm swept through Iowa. The devastation was horrific. Two-hundred thousand Iowans are still without power. The damage is said to exceed \$4 billion. A congregant of Dryland UCC in Nazareth, Dr. Susan, shared this from the Washington

Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/08/14/iowa-derecho-attention-aid/>.

The Rev. Brice Hughes is the Iowa Conference Disaster Coordinator. Karl spoke with him on Monday. Rev. Hughes said, "The Conference has supplied clean-up buckets. There could be a need for a small group to help clean up in Cedar Rapids, but the greatest need will be long-term assistance."

The network of Conference Disaster Coordinators will convene on Friday, August 21. The Iowa response and much more will be on the agenda. As is always the case, UCC Disaster Ministries is committed to long-term recovery in communities affected by disasters.

So – what role can your congregation fill at this time?

1. If you want to donate, it is always best to give cash. You can donate through your church and Conference or you can directly give at https://www.ucc.org/donate_to_disaster_relief. At this page you will also find a short video that explains why cash is best.
2. There could be a need for a response team to Iowa. Rev. Hughes says, "The team would have to be smaller than 10 persons. The work is mostly outside cleaning up debris and removing trees." If you are interested in this mission you can contact Rev. Brice Hughes at 319-752-2305 or bricehughes@hotmail.com. Please be aware that the UCC has some new restrictions concerning traveling work teams. You can download these considerations at: https://www.uccfiles.com/docs/Deploying_Volunteers_Safely_in_the_COVID_Pandemic_FINAL.docx.
3. There is also a need for eastern PA response teams due to Isaias. Our Conference works with our faith-based partners. In our area house assessments and contact with homeowners is being led by Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. Teams of volunteers are needed right now to help clean up houses affected by Isaias. Here is the current count of homes needing help in our area: Lehigh – 10; Luzerne – 1; Monroe – 6; Northampton – 7. There are 75 homes needing help in PSEC. If you can help your team will be provided with:
 - Scope of work and what to expect

- Tools if you don't have them (shovel, hammer, flat bar, utility knife)
- PPE if you don't have it
- Shock wave for mold remediation, if you don't have it

You will need to provide trash bags. Participants need to wear long pants and heavy work shoes and gloves.

4. Become advocates for survivors. Contact federal officials urging them to offer programs funds for relief. Advocate for affordable housing, equitable services, and food security. Look for ways to make your community more resilient. The devastation caused by disasters to farms, homes, schools, and infrastructure demand action.
5. Pray!! Pray!! Pray!!

If you are interested in helping to provide solutions or being a part of the PNEC Disaster Ministry Team, please contact Karl Jones at kjones275@comcast.net or 570-617-4018.