**God Is Faithful In The Storm: Hurricane Ida Response**

*Hurricane Ida made landfall in southeast Louisiana on Sunday as one of the most powerful storms in U.S. history. The initial impact caused widespread damage and left many communities—including the whole city of New Orleans—without power and many without water and sewer. As of Tuesday morning, more than a million people remained without power. It’s unclear when power will be restored to most residents, but officials believe it may be more than a month for some. At least two fatalities have been connected to the storm so far—though Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards said he expects that number to rise. The state received a major disaster declaration, which will allow federal funding for affected residents, businesses, and communities. Emergency and first responder teams, including the U.S. Coast Guard and National Guard, continue operations. Search and rescue teams from more than 15 states are conducting operations in hard-hit areas, according to FEMA.*

Week of Compassion is in touch with partners and church leaders in Louisiana and Mississippi. While we do not yet know the full impact of Hurricane Ida, we do know that damage is widespread. Reports of inland flooding are starting to come in, and we expect more as Ida continues its inland path. Disciples are among the thousands who sustained damage to their homes. At least one Disciples church building was damaged by the storm, though the full extent is not yet known.

In the coming days, weeks, and months, Week of Compassion will continue working with partners and congregations—assessing damage, providing assistance, and planning for long-term recovery in areas affected by Ida. The journey of rebuilding often takes several years, and Week of Compassion is committed to seeing the process through for the long haul.

Over the past several years, hurricanes have affected multiple Disciples of Christ congregations in Louisiana and southeast Texas. First Christian Church of Sulphur, Louisiana, knows what kind of destruction a hurricane can leave behind. Almost exactly one year ago, Hurricane Laura caused extensive damage in the community, including to their church building, as well as the homes of members. Week of Compassion support helped the church to restore their facility, while also meeting needs of their members and neighbors.

Following Hurricane Ida, churches like FCC Sulphur are organizing to serve their neighbors that are in need now. Rev. Dr. Bobbie Yellot, pastor of FCC, shared in her sermon on Sunday: “We have learned that our God is faithful, in the storm and after.” She reminded her congregation of the devastation they experienced following Hurricane Laura and of the many Disciples churches that reached out to help them in the aftermath. Then she said, “quite a few Disciples churches in south Mississippi
will need our help to recover from the damage that accompanies a storm of this size. Please consider seriously how we can respond in a tangible way to be a source of light and hope for these congregations. And pray. Pray without ceasing that these churches will know, as we have known, the love and care of the God who brought us through our storms.”

Just as Week of Compassion remains committed to long-term recovery from past hurricanes, we will also support communities in immediate need following Hurricane Ida. With your help, we will ensure that congregations affected by this storm know the love and care of God through our wider Church.

We know that more needs will emerge as assessments continue in the days ahead. For now, the best way to help is to stay, pray, and give. We invite you to join us in prayer for those in affected communities; and to give to Week of Compassion, designating gifts for “hurricane.” Give on our website or text WoC to 41444.

*www.npr.org/2021/08/31/1032737199/images-louisiana-hurricane-ida
For an interactive map of responses, visit our website.

Week of Compassion is the relief, refugee and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

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