



## ***Sanctuary: A Hurricane Dorian Update***



*Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.*

When we see the devastation, our hearts break for our brothers and sisters.

On September 1, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in the Bahamas. By the time the storm had passed a day later, the destruction was immense. As of today, September 6, approximately

13,000 homes have been destroyed. An unknown number of lives have been lost, as search and rescue efforts are ongoing.

The need is great, and in the wake of such terrible loss, many feel compelled to help. However, knowing how to help can be difficult. The situation is challenging; and in these early days, much remains uncertain.

Week of Compassion has been in communication and is coordinating with partners, both domestic and international, in the response efforts. Given the close proximity of The Bahamas, several of our U.S. partners through National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster are deploying help. For now, damage to ports and airports have limited access to the islands. We remain in communication with these partners, and are preparing to support these efforts when appropriate. As always, the best way to help immediately after a disaster is to “Stay, Pray and Give.”

Even at this early stage, we know that rebuilding needs in The Bahamas will continue for years to come. Financial gifts are the one type of support that will be helpful throughout the whole process as needs and priorities change. Through our wide network of partners, Week of Compassion can make your financial gifts reach farther-- and do more good-- than any other type of aid, by enabling those who specialize in immediate response to meet critical needs on the ground.

The majority of gifts, material and financial, come during and immediately after a disaster. But the work of recovery is long-term and ongoing. That's why Week of Compassion is committed to support through both resources and relationships. Long after a disaster, we remain present in communities as they rebuild life and livelihood. We are already planning with international partners for the extensive recovery work ahead.

In these early days, we are already hearing of Disciples in the path of the storm in the United States caring for each other and neighbors in need. From camps and conference centers offering shelter to those displaced and congregations assembling hygiene kits and clean-up buckets, to churches all across the country taking special offerings this Sunday for Week of Compassion; in all of these places, our wider Church is present to those in need. With your support, we can offer refuge to those seeking sanctuary from the storm.

Thank you for your continued generosity to those affected by Hurricane Dorian, and other storms like it. Through your gifts to Week of Compassion, we serve and walk

alongside those in great need-- around the world, around the year.

As you prepare for Sunday worship, here is a prayer--based on this week's lectionary Psalm 139-- to lift up for those in need.

*Lord, you have searched and known our need; you have been a sanctuary to those who seek and those who suffer. Hear our prayer, for those who are weary and need a place to lie down. Hear our prayer, for those who seek a path forward. Before this word is spoken from our mouths, O God, you know it so fully. Hear this word again, as we speak it together. Transform words spoken in prayer into acts of service and gifts of love. For you have promised us: there is nowhere that we may go from your spirit; nowhere to flee from your love. Make your spirit known to those who have lost their shelter, or their certainty. Lay your hand upon the hurting and the heartbroken. Grant your peace to those who wait for news of loved ones. Even as you hem us in, behind and before, take our love and our gifts out into your hurting world. May they meet the needs of this day, and the days to come. Give us your words, and show us your way, for this time and all time to come. In your name we pray, Amen.*

### **Mission**

*As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Week of Compassion works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.*

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