



Hurricane Michael: One Year Anniversary Update

Over the weekend, Typhoon Hagibis brought over 35 inches of rain causing catastrophic flooding in Tokyo and the surrounding region. As of October 15, The death toll is over 50 and may rise as rescue workers continue to search for the missing. Power outages and landslide risks are among the most urgent concerns at this time. We have heard from our partners in the area. All are safe, and they are assessing the situation. Week of Compassion will share updates about needs and responses as we learn more.



In September of 2018, Hurricane Michael devastated communities along the Florida panhandle, causing severe damage in 12 counties and flooding in many others. Following the storm, Week of Compassion responded immediately through local partners and Disciples congregations to help meet urgent needs in the area.

But recovery does not happen overnight, especially after a storm as severe as Michael. Now, a year later, coastal communities continue to rebuild homes, churches, schools, and businesses.

While Disciples congregations in other parts of the panhandle were active in providing early relief, they were outside of the impact zone. In order to support community-led long-term recovery, Week of Compassion started looking for partners in the affected communities. Through ecumenical partners--UCC Disaster Ministries and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance--our ministry was introduced to the local response organization, Rebuild Bay County. Their mission is to "be there every step of the way to facilitate the rebuilding of hope, hearts, and homes." Sharing that commitment to walk alongside communities "every step of the way," Week of Compassion committed to supporting the work of Rebuild Bay County as they continue to provide long-term recovery.

"After a year of recovery efforts, we've come a long way, but there's still so much to do," says Executive Director Donna Pilson. "We're making our way to 'still' displaced residents, and are appreciative of all of the volunteers and resources coming in. This month we are starting our Rebuild Bay School Initiative where we will provide dedicated case management to the school-based population. With more than 2500 students classified as homeless, and nearly 200 teacher/staff still displaced, we recognize the need to try and quickly get this population back home to stabilize the community."

As the community works to secure housing for all of its residents, Rebuild Bay County also recognizes the need for emotional and mental health support, and the power of community connection in the midst of recovery. Last week, on the

anniversary of the storm, a “Nite to Unite” event created an opportunity for people to come together, share resources, and celebrate the progress thus far.

On this anniversary of such a tragic event, Week of Compassion is grateful for our wide network of partners and for strong, resilient communities that care for each other along the way. Through the work of organizations like Rebuild Bay County, lives are transformed as people affected by the storm look ahead to the future.

With your help, our wider church was able to respond to immediate needs after the storm-- and remains present for the next phase of the journey.

Photo: [Rebuild Bay County](#)

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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