

Action Update- August 16

Week of Compassion Responds to Haiti Earthquake



On Saturday morning, August 14, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the south of Haiti. The earthquake was also felt in other Caribbean islands. This earthquake was stronger than the 2010 quake that devastated the nation's capital of Port-au-Prince, and news outlets are reporting nearly 1300 lives lost so far.

Although it is too early to know the full impact of the destruction, casualties, and loss of livelihoods, initial reports from Week of Compassion partners indicate that the impact has been devastating and that hospitals are overwhelmed. Thousands of homes have been damaged or destroyed. Communication channels have been affected, as well as infrastructure including roads, which will affect immediate response and create challenges in getting help to those in need.

Many aftershocks are making the situation even more unstable; and to further complicate response, Haiti is currently in the direct path of Tropical Storm Grace, expected to make landfall later today (Monday). The storm exposes an already vulnerable population to high winds and heavy rain that could trigger life-threatening flash floods and landslides.

Week of Compassion partners have already deployed volunteers to help with rescue operations and assess the damage. They are working to meet immediate needs, including:

- temporary shelters
- flashlights and emergency power generators
- hygiene kits, clothes, water, and food
- first aid kits, health and rescue workers
- fuel, vehicles

Our partners are also planning for longer term response, including construction; community-based psychosocial support and trauma recovery; reconstruction of damaged water infrastructure; and livelihood support.

Through Week of Compassion and our network of partners, Disciples have long-standing relationships with communities in Haiti. For many years, we have walked alongside the people of Haiti through earthquakes, hurricanes, and other challenges. As Week of Compassion Executive Director, Rev. Vy Nguyen shares: *My first visit to Haiti was to see the rebuilding projects we supported following the 2010 earthquake. The earthquake this*

past weekend has reminded me of the ongoing challenges that the people of Haiti face. Our work was important then, and it is even more important now. As Disciples, Haiti has a special place in our hearts, through the relationships that Week of Compassion has built upon for 7 decades. The challenges in Haiti compel us, again and again, to be the Church, responding to suffering with compassion. Week of Compassion remains committed to rebuilding in Haiti for the long term.

Because of those long-term relationships, we can share one bright spot in this otherwise heavy time: following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, as well as Hurricane Matthew in 2016, Week of Compassion supported communities in rebuilding houses and schools. The goal of both of those responses was to help build stronger structures that would withstand future disasters. On Sunday, a community where our partners rebuilt seven houses and a school reported that *none were damaged in Saturday's earthquake*. The school will be ready to welcome students when the new school year starts in a few weeks.

As we walk alongside our neighbors in Haiti in the days ahead, we invite you to *stay, pray, and give*, showing the support and compassion of our wider church during this disaster. Your generosity will make a big difference for people facing unthinkable challenges and great suffering. We invite you to give to Week of Compassion and designate your gift for *earthquake*:

[**Give online**](#)

Text WoC to 41444

Or mail checks to:

PO Box 1986

Indianapolis, IN 46206

Thank you for sharing your compassion in such generous spirit. With your help, there will be more stories of hope, resilience, and good news to share in the days ahead.

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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