



Episcopal Relief & Development to Assist Our Brothers and Sisters in the Diocese of Texas-Hurricane Harvey

Episcopal Relief & Development is currently working with The Rt. Rev. Andy Doyle, Bishop of Texas and local and state recovery authorities in assessing the greatest needs of the people of Southeastern Texas and how Episcopal Relief & Development can assist in meeting those needs. Please consider a donation to the Episcopal Relief and Development Hurricane Harvey Response Fund by donating online line at <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/hurricane-harvey-response> or sending a donation to:

Episcopal Relief & Development
Hurricane Harvey Fund
P.O. Box 7058
Merrifield, VA 22116-7058

Indicate on your check: Hurricane Harvey Fund

As Harvey moves Episcopal Relief & Development will be looking at the possible needs in parts of Louisiana affected by this storm.

The following is message from Bishop Doyle to the Diocese of Texas:

Hurricane Harvey and our Mission

Let me begin by thanking all of our brothers and sisters around the world who are holding us up in prayer. We are grateful for the hope you lend us at this time of disaster and fear.

We have been in touch with many people and know that the disaster stretches across the whole southern part of our diocese. We expect the area to grow as the slow moving storm progresses across the state.

We are following the guidance of our officials and hunkering down in order to remain safe while they focus on those in the most immediate danger. Please pray for many clergy and laity who have water in their home. Pray also for those who need rescuing and are even now being rescued. We have a number of first responders and they also need our prayers as they are leaving loved ones to help with rescue operations.

We want to emphasize that we need to wait until the danger has passed to make our response so as not to complicate further the ongoing rescue operations.

Our plan for response includes the following:

1. We are in a standby mode until the storm passes.

2. We have had an effective test of our Alertmedia, our app for communicating with heads of congregations and staff in emergencies.
3. We have been in touch with many of our clergy families in the affected areas and heard from them about their situations. This afternoon we will use Alertmedia to gather more information.
4. Once the storm and danger has passed we will begin planning deployment of our Spiritual Care teams to affected areas.
5. We will now and will continue to assess area damage as we get information from multiple sources and evaluate ways we can make an effective response.
6. An overall strategy will be developed and a coordinated response will be managed collaboratively working with our congregations. We will then implement a strategy and coordinate with resources.

As I write these words, I am very present to the sadness, fear, uncertainty, and grief that fill our minds and hearts in the wake of hurricane and tropical storm Harvey. Coastal towns along the Texas Gulf have been destroyed, and catastrophic flooding has left much of Houston underwater. Truly this storm has brought all of us to our knees, and our only recourse is to join King David in his plea for mercy: "Save me, O God, for the waters have risen up to my neck" (Psalm 69:1).

Two of the most powerful images in Scripture have Jesus Christ exercising authority over the sea. Jesus commands the stormy sea to be calm: "Who is this?" The disciples ask. "For even the winds and the sea obey him" (Matt 8:26). In a different passage, Jesus walks on the sea (Matt 14:26). The point being made by the Biblical author is clear: namely, that God's power to save, renew, heal, and restore is infinitely greater than the sea's power to destroy. The God we know in Jesus Christ forever sits "enthroned amidst the flood" (Psalm 29:10).

It is with this hope that we wait for healing together and, in concert with our Baptismal vows, we pledge to be conduits through whom God brings healing and renewal to others. We also commit to allowing other human beings to be vessels through whom God brings healing and renewal to us, for receiving is always its own kind of courage.

We do not know the future of Harvey or the city of Houston. But as Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matt 24:35). "I will never leave you," says our Lord standing on the waves. "Never will I forsake you" (Heb 13:5).

My prayers, the prayers of your diocesan staff, and or global family are with you. Jesus is with you. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, in your Word you have given us a vision of that holy City where the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea: Behold and visit, we pray, the cities of the earth devastated by Hurricane Harvey. Sustain those displaced by the storm with food, drink, and all other bodily necessities of life. We especially remember before you all poor and neglected persons it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, we may ever be defended by your gracious and ready help; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, D.D.
IX Bishop of Texas