

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

October 9th, 2022

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

A Service of the Word



The Ten with Leprosy

a painting by Michelle Winter

God Running blog.

<https://godrunning.com/2018/04/28/jesus-and-the-5-love-languages-chapter-16/>



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a just world for all

October 9th, 2022
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
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*"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more.
It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity.
It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend."
-Melody Beattie*

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

**Please stand as you are able*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: Come, beloved of God, and pause in the place of liminal longing.

Many: We come betwixt and between, pulled in many directions.

One: Trust that the Holy One is already forming a new creation in you.

Many: We come trusting God's mercy to center and change us.

One: Indeed, the Holy One calls you by name for deeds of mercy.

Many: May God's ancient action be a present presence as we gather.

*GATHERING PRAYER

**Holy Love, take our weary waiting and form in us a readiness for renewal.
Shape our hearts for healing, our minds for mending, and our souls for sharing.**

**Let no weight of the moment prevent our remembering of your long reach
of faithfulness cast over the whole creation. Still us enough to discover again
your prayer rising in our praying, that we may be formed by your love made
known to us in Jesus Christ.**

**By this, change us on the inside that our outer lives may more clearly reflect your will
and way of mercy into the world. Amen,**

***HYMN – Pilgrim Hymnal (Blue) 38 Morning Has Broken**

Morning Has Broken

Author: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965

Tune: BUNESSAN 5.4.5.4.D.

Gaelic Melody

Harm: David Evans, 1874-1948

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**1 Morning has broken
like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
fresh from the Word!**

**2 Sweet the rain's new fall
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall
on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness
where God's feet pass.**

**3 Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning
born of the one light
Eden saw play!
Praise with elation,
praise every morning,
God's recreation
of the new day!**

A READING OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: 2 Kings 5:1-15

The Hebrew Scripture reading is the story of foreigner Naaman and the Hebrew prophet Elisha in 2 Kings 5. Naaman was the commander of the king of Aram's army, but he suffered from leprosy. Naaman's wife had a servant, an Israelite young woman who was taken captive, and this servant told Naaman's wife about the prophet in Samaria (the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel), who could heal. The king of Aram wrote a letter to the king of Israel on behalf of Naaman, but the king of Israel freaked out, because he wasn't God. Elisha, God's prophet, told the king of Israel to calm down and to let Naaman come to him, because then he would know there was a prophet in Israel. Naaman arrived at Elisha's house, and Elisha's messenger told Naaman to go wash seven times in the Jordan

and he would be clean. Naaman was angry because it was too simple. It had to be more complicated than that, otherwise he could have just bathed at home. Naaman's servants reasoned with him: he would rather do something difficult, instead of a simple act for healing? Naaman gives in, bathes in the Jordan seven times, and his skin is restored. Naaman then realizes there is no God but God, the God of Israel.

1 Now Naaman was commander of the army of the ruler of Aram. He was a great officer and highly esteemed. It was at Naaman's hand that God gave a victory to Aram. He was a mighty warrior. And he had leprosy.

2 On one of their raids the Arameans captured a young woman who was an Israelite. She served Naaman's wife. 3 One day she said to her mistress, "If only Naaman would see the prophet who is in Samaria. He would cure Naaman's leprosy." 4 Naaman went to the ruler and told him what the Israelite woman said. 5 "By all means, go," the ruler replied. I will send a letter to the ruler of Israel." So Naaman left, taking ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. 6 The letter that he took to the ruler of Israel read, "With this letter I am sending my attendant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of leprosy."

7 As soon as the ruler of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes, and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a fight with me!" 8 When Elisha the prophet of God learned that the ruler of Israel tore his robes, he sent a message to the ruler, "Why did you tear your robes? Have Naaman come to me, and he will learn that there is a prophet in Israel." 9 So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to say to the warrior, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored, and you will be cleansed."

11 But Naaman went away angry, and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand there before me, calling on the name YHWH and wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So, he turned and went away in a rage. 13 Naaman's attendants went to him saying, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'?" 14 So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the prophet of God told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a youth. 15 Then Naaman and his retinue went back to the prophet of God. He stood before him, and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept a gift from a grateful person."

PSALM RESPONSE: Psalm 111 (Responsively)

Psalm 111 is a song of praise, reminding the congregation of all that God has done for them. God provides for those who are faithful, and God keeps the covenant with the people. Everything God does is faithful, just, and true. The beginning of wisdom, the psalmist writes, is the fear, or awe, of God. God is far beyond what we can possibly imagine or understand, and those who are wise understand this, giving God all the glory, honor, and praise.

1 Alleluia!

I will thank you, God, with all my heart
in the meeting of the just and their assembly.

**2 Great are your works,
to be pondered by all who love them.**

3 Majestic and glorious are your works,
and your justice stands firm forever.

**4 You make us remember your wonders—
you are compassion and love.**

5 You give food to those who revere you,
keeping your Covenant ever in mind.

**6 You reveal to your people the power of your actions
by giving them the lands of the nations as their
inheritance.**

7 The works of your hands are truth and justice,
and all your precepts are sure,

**8 standing firm forever and ever,
and carried out uprightly and faithfully.**

9 You have sent deliverance to your people
and established your Covenant forever.

Your Name is holy and awe-inspiring!

**10 Reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom—
and those who have it prove themselves wise.
Your praise will last forever!**

SECOND READING: 2 Timothy 2:8-15

Paul writes in these verses of 2 Timothy 2 to urge Timothy not to forget the reason that Paul is suffering in prison is because of the Gospel. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and the resurrection cannot be contained, just like the word of God cannot be contained, either. Paul is enduring imprisonment because God cannot be imprisoned. Paul is in solidarity with Christ because Christ has been in solidarity with us, and even when we are faithless, Christ remains faithful. Paul urges Timothy to make an effort to speak plainly and faithfully and not get caught up when others want to debate words.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ, a descendent of David, was raised from the dead. This is the Gospel I preach; 9 in preaching it I suffer as a criminal—even to the point of being thrown into chains—but there is no chaining the word of God! 10 Therefore I bear with all of this for the sake of those whom God has chosen, in order that they may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus, and with it, eternal glory.

11 You can depend on this:

If we have died with Christ,
we will also live with Christ;

12 if we hold out to the end,
we will also reign with Christ.

If we deny Christ,
Christ will deny us.
13 If we are unfaithful,
Christ will remain faithful,
for Christ can never be unfaithful.

14 Keep reminding people of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words, which is of no value and only ruins those who listen. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

GOSPEL READING: Luke 17:11-19

The Gospel reading tells of when Jesus and the disciples passed between Samaria and Galilee. A group of ten people with leprosy called out to Jesus. People with leprosy were cut off from the rest of society as they were seen as unclean and might possibly be contagious. Jesus calls back to them to go show themselves to the priests. As they went on their way, the people realized they were made clean. One came back to Jesus, praising God, and fell at Jesus's feet to thank him. That one was a Samaritan, and he was the only one who came back to praise God. Jesus told Samaritan that his faith had made him well. This is the second time in Luke (the first is the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10) that Jesus uses a Samaritan, an outsider and foreigner, as an example of faithfulness from someone that the reader/listener would not expect.

11 On the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus passed along the borders of Samaria and Galilee.
12 As Jesus was entering a village, ten people with leprosy met him. Keeping their distance,
13 they raised their voices and said, "Jesus, Rabbi, have pity on us!"

14 When Jesus saw them, he responded, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."

As they were going, they were healed. 15 One of them, realizing what had happened, came back praising God in a loud voice, 16 then fell down at the feet of Jesus and spoke his praises. The individual was a Samaritan.

17 Jesus replied, "Weren't all ten made whole? Where are the other nine? 18 Was there no one to return and give thanks except this foreigner?" 19 Then Jesus said to the Samaritan, "Stand up and go your way; your faith has saved you."

CHORAL RESPONSE – His Name is Wonderful

Music by Audrey Mieir, 1959
Choir: Barbara Rossington and Bob Bucklew

**Reflection— Between Desperation and Faith – Between Yearning and Gratitude -
Rev. Scott Rosenstein**

WE RESPOND

*PRAYER OF RESPONSE

Almighty Creator, you have molded and shaped us in your image, and yet we do not understand you. We seek you but fail to comprehend how wonderful and awe-inspiring you are and the world you have made.

Far too often we make you in our own image, O God, distorting who you really are and trying to shape you into who we want you to be, but you are the Almighty, God Most High, and cannot be contained.

Great Creator, instead we pray that you might mold us and shape us into who you need us to be. Mold and shape our hearts to be full of your love for the world. Lead us into your ways, to grow in wisdom and insight on the journey of faith. Amen.

*HYMN - NCH 547 **Amazing Grace** vv. 1, 2, & 3

Amazing Grace

Author: John Newton, 1779; alt.

Tune: AMAZING GRACE (NEW BRITAIN) C.M.

Arranger: Edwin O. Excell

Columbia Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829

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**1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.**

**2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!**

**3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Luke tells us that Jesus healed ten people with leprosy, but only one returned to give thanks, and that one was a foreigner. Again and again in the Bible the unlikely one in the story becomes the model of a generosity and grace. Maybe today, we are the ones God is hoping will return to give thanks and praise. May we offer our best in joyful response to the gift of our lives that this mission of healing may continue to spread throughout the world.

***PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS – DOXOLOGY**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***BLESSING OF THE GIFTS**

Holy one, in Jesus Christ you have shown
what your heart is like—merciful
and abounding in steadfast love.
Form that same spirit in us that our lives
may become continual prayers
of thanksgiving.
Let no cry of your creation
go unheard.
Form us as agents of
practical praise, molding us with mercy
for a world crying out for healing. Amen

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER – using “debts” and “debtors”

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen

GOING FORTH

***PARTING HYMN - NCH 419 Now Thank We All Our God**

Now Thank We All Our God

Author: Martin Rinkart, 1647

Translator: Catherine Winkworth, 1858; alt.

) Tune: NUN DANKET 6.7.6.7.6.6.6.6.

Composer: Johann Crüger, 1647

Harmonizer: Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

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**1 Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
in whom this world rejoices,
Who, from our parent's arms,
has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.**

**2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
And keep us still in grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
in this world and the next.**

**3 All praise and thanks to God
our Maker now be given,
To Christ, and Spirit, too,
our help in highest heaven,
The one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore.
For thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.**

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

One: Having prayed for the places where we live, we go forth.

**Many: God sends us into the apartments and homes,
into the streets and playgrounds to bring hope.**

One: Having gathered with God's people of every age, we go forth.

**Many: We will join Jesus in serving folks whose birthdays are celebrated in decades,
and newborns who are facing poverty and fear.**

One: Having shared prayers and songs with friends and strangers, we go forth.

**Many: We will welcome those who the world forgets but who God loves,
as surely as we have been embraced by the Spirit. Amen.**

***POSTLUDE**

* * * * *

Credits

- (1) Commissioning and Benediction are adapted from *Liturgy w/communion for October 9th, 2022 (Pentecost 18/Trinity 17– Proper 23, Ordinary 28- C)*, written by the Rev. Thom M. Shuman, and posted October 1st, 2022, to his blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. [Http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com](http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com)
- (2) The Gathering Prayer, Call to Worship, Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings, and the Blessing of the Gifts are adapted from *Show us Mercy: Service prayers for the eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost* were written by Dr. David Long-Higgins Conference Minister of the Heartland conference, United Church of Christ. After Pentecost 23C All publishing rights reserved.
- (3) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Worship Resources for October 9th, 2022*, written by the Rev. Mindi Welton-Thomas, and posted on September 30th, 2022, on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lution.org/>.
- (3) Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License #A-736636. All rights reserved.

Ministers, *All of Us*
Scott Rosenstein, *Pastor*
Betty Funk, *Pianist and Music Director*
Keith Konet, *Council President*
Beverly Wurm, *Administrative Assistant*



NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

God is Still Speaking...

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

Tithes and Offerings - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and mailed to:

**Zion United Church of Christ
c/o Keith Konet
1039 Bridlewood Drive
Copley, OH 44321**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

Our Church's Website Address is: zionchurchtremont.org.

Check out our website and Facebook page for updates and news!

Season after Pentecost - Ordinary Time

The longest season of the liturgical calendar is filled with Sundays called "Ordinary Time." **The season - called the Season after Pentecost or Ordinary Time - began with Trinity Sunday and ends with Reign of Christ Sunday (the Sunday before the start of Advent).** If you're like me, you might hear "ordinary time" as "boring time." But that's not the case! The word "ordinary" most likely means "numbered" here (think ordinal numbers), because the Sundays of Ordinary Time are numbered. **In this season we move from concentrating on the event of Christ in the world to focusing toward the impact of being in Christ in the world. A life in the unity of the Trinity is one of being shaped and sent daily in the image and in the purpose of Holy Love.** The liturgical color for this season is green. During the Season after Pentecost, we focus on the life of the Church as it grows in the midst of the world.

"When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall.

Think of it—always."

— Mahatma Gandhi

Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community,
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement
- Our 155th Anniversary as a community of faith of Zion Church on May 15th, 2022.
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For children separated from their parents at detention camps along our southern border.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.

- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and the United States.
- The people of Afghanistan, Venezuela, Syria, Yemen, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Kurdish people and the Christians of northern Syria - for peace, nutrition, and justice.
- **The people of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, western Cuba, eastern Canada-along with the people of Florida and the Carolinas profoundly impacted by the recent hurricanes. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.**
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive, a total of 517 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of October 5th, 2022. In 2021 a total of 693 mass shooting incidents occurred across the US, in 2020 a total of 611, in 2019 a total of 417, with 337 incidents in 2018. While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit – and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States - We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.
- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the omicron variant surge: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
 - Patti Augustine and family
 - Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) in Alliance, Ohio
 - Betty Funk (*our Minister of Music*)
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob; friend of Elaine – health concerns*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara, and Michael Reed.
 - Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet
 - Keith Konet
 - Marcia Leslie (*neighbor and friend – health concerns*)
 - Elaine Lukacs (has been moved to: *Altenheim Skilled Nursing Facility: 18627 Shurmer Road, Room 408 Strongsville, OH 44136*) 440-238-3361 ext. 5071
 - Linda and James Mortach (*Elaine Lukacs' sister & brother-in-law*) & Linda's daughter
 - Patricia Matheny (prayers also for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray)
 - Lee Matsos and family
 - Barbara Rossington (*move to a new senior housing community*)
 - Henry Senyak (*resident community leader – cancer*)

- The family of Michael O'Brien particularly his wife, Debbie Webb (*following Michael's death last Fall. Our love and sympathy to Debbie and Michael's family*).
- Beverly Wurm

Zion's Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm

Beverly began a part-time position with us. She will be keeping some limited Office Hours at church/home. The days and hours are:

Monday – 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: zionchurchtremont@gmail.com or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile).

Help for Ukraine

Gifts made to UCC **Ukraine Emergency Appeal** will provide shelter, food, and other care to war refugees and internally displaced people.

Donate online with the link below:

<https://support.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal>

Or designate a check for Ukraine Relief and mail to:

United Church of Christ,
P.O. Box 71957
Cleveland, OH 44194.

Gifts made to **Sharing America's Resources Abroad (S.A.R.A)** provide food, clothing, and sanitary items for refugees fleeing to Hungary.

Donate online with the link:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=QC5P9F6Z9LT32

Or designate a check for **S.A.R.A. - Donations for Ukraine Emergency Fund** and mail to:

SARA
c/o Heartland Conference UCC
P.O. Box 1230
Worthington, OH 43085.

Please know that your gifts of any size make a difference in this critical time.

Pakistan's 'dire' flood crisis is subject of UCC emergency appeal

The United Church of Christ has issued an emergency appeal for relief-and-recovery gifts in response to what it called "massive flooding" across most of Pakistan.

Wider Church Ministries launched the **UCC Pakistan Response Fund** Sept. 16.

Torrential monsoons since June have dumped nearly five times as much rain as the country usually gets. So far, the resulting floods have:

- Killed more than 1,400 people
- Affected 30 million people and displaced 800,000
- Damaged or destroyed 1 million homes, as well as farms, livestock, roads, bridges, schools and more.

One-third of country still submerged

"The situation in Pakistan remains dire as more than a third of the country is still under water," said the Rev. Josh Baird, who heads the UCC's Global H.O.P.E. team. "The most pressing needs are for food, clean water and sanitation, and emergency housing."

"In areas where the water has not receded, people are forced to construct temporary shelter on whatever dry patch of land they can access — often on the edge of roads."

"At its peak, 73 percent of Pakistan's districts were impacted by flooding," the appeal's web page says. "... More than half of its districts have been declared 'calamity hit' by the government — a number that is expected to rise as the rain continues and floods flow through the Punjab and Sindh provinces."

World's churches respond together

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has called the crisis an "unprecedented natural disaster" caused by "the intensification of climate change." "No country deserves this fate, but particularly not countries like Pakistan that have done almost nothing to contribute to global warming," he said. He called on the international community for "massive financial support," especially from "countries that have contributed more to climate change."

Baird said the UCC is working with ecumenical partners to respond. Community World Service Asia, a partner through the ACT Alliance, is meeting immediate needs "while laying the groundwork for long-term recovery," he said. "Gifts to the Pakistan Appeal will support emergency relief and focus on providing long-term care through the gifting of items such as seed for fields and feed and vaccines for livestock."

"With more than 6.4 million people projected to require humanitarian assistance, we anticipate walking with affected communities for the restoration of homes and livelihoods for many years."

People can donate electronically at this page: <https://tinyurl.com/ya8msm3n> by selecting "International Emergency" as the option and entering "Pakistan response" as the specific appeal.

Gifts by check can be made payable to United Church of Christ, with "Pakistan Response Fund" noted in the memo section, and mailed to P.O. Box 71957 Cleveland, OH 44194.

UCC launches emergency appeal for 2022 hurricanes – Ian, Fiona and those still to come – to read more, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/5n6kpt24>

Hurricanes 2022 Emergency Appeal

The United Church of Christ is issuing an appeal to support immediate needs for families and communities affected by Hurricanes Fiona and Ian.

While this year's hurricane season started slow, the last two weeks have made it clear just how dangerous and destructive these storms can be. With wind speeds topping out at 130 miles per hour and 155 miles per hour, respectively, Hurricanes Fiona and Ian have left devastation in their wake. More than a week and a half after Fiona's winds left all of Puerto Rico in the dark, hundreds of thousands of people remain without power. Communities remain in crisis mode as the delivery of food, drinking water, and medical needs is challenged in hard-to-reach places cut off by downed trees, mudslides, and washed away bridges.

Millions have lost power and access to clean drinking water. The need for emergency food support, medical care, and temporary shelter is high.

Rev. Edward Rivera-Santiago, Pastor General of Iglesia Evangélica Unida de Puerto Rico shared that congregations across the island are reporting both church and community members whose homes are severely damaged, with some facing total loss. Solidarity grants from Global H.O.P.E. and Global Ministries have been sent to assist with immediate needs while basic infrastructure is repaired and more complete assessments can be made.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Ian still rages, with widespread damage in Cuba, flooding and wind damage across Florida, and coastal flooding threatening Georgia and the Carolinas. It is way too early to know the full extent of damage in Cuba and in Florida, yet early indications point to a recovery that will take many years – perhaps a decade.

Emergency response personnel are active. Relief agencies are meeting immediate needs where they can gain access to communities hard hit by the storm. United Church of Christ partners through National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster who focus on relief are implementing their plans. Global Ministries Area Executive for Latin America Angel Luis Rivera is in touch with bilateral partners. Conference leaders and Conference Disaster Coordinators are making contact, assessing needs, and communicating with the Global H.O.P.E. team so that help can be channeled, now and for the long term.

Your generous financial support will be used by our partners in the areas of greatest need, for relief and long-term recovery. Donate online: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7bd3e2>

If you prefer, you may mail a check payable to the United Church of Christ, PO BOX 71957 Cleveland, OH 44194. Please be sure to note "Hurricanes 2022 Fund" in the memo section.