



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

PITTSBURGH EPISCOPAL AREA

Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference

P.O. Box 5002
1204 Freedom Road
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

THOMAS J. BICKERTON
RESIDENT BISHOP

ROBERT W. HIGGINBOTHAM, JR.
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

October 31, 2012

Dear Friends,

As I write this, most of us are sitting in the comfort of a home or office. There have been few power outages and flooding has been limited in Western Pennsylvania. While we have seen and felt Hurricane Sandy blowing around us, her wrath has affected us much less than it has our neighbors to the east and south.

They need our help. I am asking you to once again do what you do best here in Western Pennsylvania. This is yet another opportunity for us to act in response to our deep faith in God and genuine concern for God's children.

As these days unfold, the magnitude of the damage will be revealed. So will the opportunity for us to respond. In the meantime, let me urge you to consider the following:

- Include the people affected by this storm in our daily thoughts and prayers. Pray for their courage, strength, and healing.
- Begin assembling cleaning buckets (formerly known as flood buckets) and health kits. Western Pennsylvania has a rich history of mobilizing our people to reach out in this practical and tangible way. Let's rise up and do it again! Go to www.wpaumc.org/missionbarn to get specific instructions. (Use the links on the right side of the page.) Completed buckets can be dropped off at the Mission Barn, the Conference Center, or district offices.
- Consider mobilizing a work team to assist in the recovery once that phase gets underway. Our trained Early Response Team members have been on alert and ready to respond since before the storm arrived. [UMCOR cautions](#) against volunteers going to an affected area before they are asked by those in charge. I also would ask you to make sure that you work through our Volunteers in Mission Coordinator Diane Miller or Disaster Response Coordinators Rev. Rick Nelson and Calvin Cook so that we can coordinate a unified response that will increase the effectiveness of our outreach. Contact Diane at Diane.Miller@wpaumc.org.
 - Encourage those in your church and community to join you in donating to UMCOR's US Disaster Response, Hurricanes 2012, Advance #3021787. Donations may be made online at www.umcor.org or by check payable to WPAUMC to the Conference Treasurer at the United Methodist Center, Box 5002, Cranberry Township, PA 16066-0002. You can also text the word RESPONSE to 80888 to give an immediate \$10 donation.

In the biblical translation, The Message, the words of Paul to the church at Ephesus have great meaning for us today: God can do anything, you know – far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us." (Ephesians 3:20)

May we be open to the manner in which God can and will work within us to be the face of Christ to our sisters and brothers in need.

The Journey Continues, . . .



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