



8-30-17 Transcript of Regional Minister Pam Holt's Video

“Immediate Needs for Hurricane Harvey: How You Can Help”

Greetings, compassionate and generous Disciples of Christ in Oklahoma!

You might rememberOn that day, the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of heaven were opened. It rained for forty days and forty nights, and the waters swelled. That's the way the story unfolds in the Book of Genesis, and it could be exactly what our brothers and sisters in South Texas might say about the unprecedented rains that have devastated the Texas coastline.

But today, it is truly a glorious day for our South Texas friends because the clouds from Hurricane Harvey have parted, the skies are blue, and the sun is shining. And they are discovering gratitude in a deep and profound way despite the grief and overwhelming, exhausting work before them.

Oklahoma folks know what devastation is, and we also know what it is like to be on the receiving end of grace and acts of kindness. Because we are compassionate and generous disciples of Christ, we are anxious to help our brothers and sisters in great need in south Texas. And we are all asking "What can we do?"

Right now, the waters are still very high, and while the clouds have parted to reveal blue sky, people are still being rescued from dangerous situations.

While there are many needs and many pleas on FaceBook, in consultation with Mary Hughes Gaudreau, Oklahoma Conference of Church's expert on Spiritual Disaster and Care, Vy Nguyen from Week of Compassion, Josh Baird from Disciples Volunteering, Rebekah Belase from Church World Service, and Zena McAdams, the Interim Regional Minister of the Christian Church in the Southwest, we are recommending the following:

PRAY. Pray for the millions of victims of this storm who have lost their homes, who are displaced, those with medical issues, those with mental illness, those who were already homeless, all whose lives have been interrupted and will be for days and weeks and months. Pray for all the children. Pray for those who are still lost. Pray for all the rescuers, the first responders who are working on the ground and who are exhausted yet determined. Pray for the Red Cross and the Salvation Army who are in urgent mode. Pray for city officials who are already thinking about the long-term clean up. Pray for all the livestock and pets who were abandoned. Pray for all, that their fear and uncertainty of what is to come and will turn to gratitude and joy for what is. Pray that they remember God's abiding presence and that the blessed one who comes to help really is one of many who are delivering the message of hope and grace.

Because we are compassionate and generous disciples, we want to drop what we are doing to go and help. Now is not the time! The situation is dangerous and is ongoing even though the sun has come out, there will be plenty of volunteer opportunities for clean-up and long term recovery. Our office will listen for on-site mission opportunities in the days and weeks and months ahead for you to go and be the hands and feet of Christ among them.

While waiting, please give to the Week of Compassion either online or in worship on Sunday and designate it to Hurricane Harvey. 100% of your gifts will go to help these communities rebuild. The Oklahoma Region is donating from its own designated Disaster & Relief fund to Week of Compassion.

Remember the hygiene kits that we made last April at Regional Assembly? Church World Service is sending Hygiene Kits to Texas. They need more. Gather your resources and make hygiene kits.

In just a few days, Clean Up Buckets will be needed. CWS is in desperate need of more clean up buckets. We need to make more! In the next few Sundays, organize and make clean-up buckets. CWS will be needing these buckets by September 30th.

Instructions for both will be in an email to your congregation and on our website. We will publish the drop off points for these hygiene kits and buckets when they have been established. Just get started!

Please remember you can always give of yourself — you can be a blood donor. Find your local blood donation station and designate it Hurricane Harvey.

These are just first steps to Oklahoma disciples being the hands and feet of Christ in South Texas.

Please know that this is a situation that the needs for help will change, almost daily. This is the first of several communications that will come. An e-mail is being sent to Oklahoma pastors and congregations today to provide links to all I have mentioned here. And, we will do our best to keep you informed as we become aware of needs, so that we can continue to be faithful disciples of Christ, working together to love and serve like Jesus.

I give thanks that we are Oklahoma Disciples — praying and caring together. May God's blessing continue to be upon all at work this day.

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