

Bishop Webb issues letter on Hurricane Harvey

Editor's note: On Monday, August 28, Bishop Mark J. Webb released the following letter about the devastation caused by Hurricane Harvey.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As you are aware, Hurricane Harvey continues to cause tremendous devastation to the greater Houston area, forcing thousands to evacuate. When the waters subside, many people will return to discover their homes and businesses have been destroyed. Rebuilding will take weeks, months, even years. I know you have been keeping these people in your prayers; I ask you to continue. And I ask you to allow God to make you part of the answer to these prayers.

I have been in conversation with Bishop Scott Jones of the Texas Conference, and have reached out to Bishop Robert Schnase of the Rio Texas Conference assuring them of our prayers and to determine specific ways we can assist in the future, but right now there are two immediate material needs you and your congregation can meet:

1. Invite your congregation to take up a special collection one Sunday in September. Announce to your people which Sunday you will do this and ask them to be especially generous. You may forward these funds to the Conference Office with a single check,

made out to Upper New York Conference with FUND # 481 – “2017 Hurricane Harvey Disaster Relief” on the memo line.

2. Assemble Cleaning Kits (Flood Buckets) and bring these to the Mission Central Hub at the United Methodist Center. Click here for instructions.

In the future, Volunteers in Mission (VIM) will also be needed to help with the recovery. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) will let us know when teams can be sent.

When I see the images of flooded homes and distraught people, my heart breaks, but I am reminded of God's promise in Isaiah, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you,” (Isaiah 42:3).

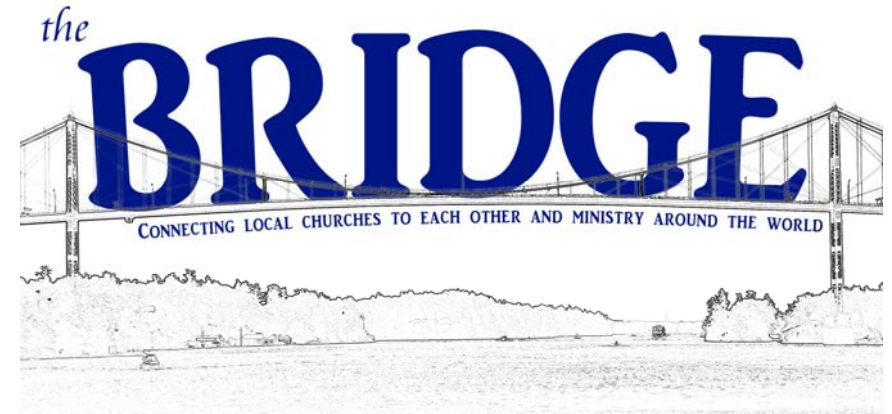
God does not abandon, but stands with us in the midst of the wreckage and will enable the people to recover. We are called and privileged to be part of God's presence and work in this. And so, I ask you to offer your prayers, your dollars, and your time.

Grace and peace,



Bishop Mark J. Webb

Learn what Upper New York Conference leaders learned from their trip to South Korea, hosted by the Bupyeong Methodist Church, by visiting <http://www.unyumc.org/news/perspectives>.



The Upper New York Conference's vision is to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and to be God's love with our neighbors in all places.

A look inside!

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The Bridge is a Conference Communications Ministry tool that delivers to local churches news and stories of ministry from around the Upper New York Conference and the world.

www.unyumc.org

How the UMC denounces racism

As a response to the racist events that took place in Charlottesville, August 12-13, 2017, the UMC is taking action. Here are just a few of the ways the UMC has responded to what took place in Charlottesville, VA.

- They placed a full page ad in *The New York Times* and *USA Today* on Aug. 16. Together, these two papers reach about 2 million people. You can see the ad at <http://bit.ly/UMCNYTimesad>.

- They developed several articles, which cover the incident but also provide help and guidance on various fronts.
- They created video ad spots on denouncing racism.

Visit the UMC's comprehensive landing page for the response to Charlottesville at UMC.org/EmbraceLove that provides up-to-date content on the response from across the church, including resources and helpful tips.

Statement on Charlottesville from president of the Council of Bishops

My shock, dismay and grief over the clashes between white supremacy advocates and counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, continue to grow. I grieve for the lives lost, and pray for the family of Heather Heyer, the families of the two state troopers killed while monitoring the Charlottesville demonstration

from the air, and for the healing of all the injured. I am shocked by the blatant resurgence of white nationalism, neo-Nazism and racially motivated domestic terrorism in the United States. I am dismayed (and frightened) by the animosity, division, extremism and evil that is spiraling out of control in the U.S.



United Methodist Bishops respond to Charlottesville

Bishop Mark J. Webb quickly shared a response to the violence Charlottesville that was featured in the August Issue II Bridge and is available on the Conference website at <http://bit.ly/BishopWebbreCharlottesville>.

However, more than 30 United Methodist Bishops have issued statements condemning racism. Many called on United Methodists to pray and stand

against hatred of any kind. This outpouring of statements against violence and racism shows how our church is United in standing against hate and committed to being God's love for all people. Visit <http://bit.ly/Bishopsagainstracism> to read the statements.



Let there be no excuses or political justification for the evil that was on full display in Charlottesville last Saturday. Nor, let us forget that many such displays of white supremacy, racism and hatred go un-reported or under-reported in many places. White supremacist and neo-Nazi ideologies are abhorrent and entirely inconsistent with the Christian faith.

Jesus called his followers to "love your neighbor." It is clear this key spiritual imperative means all neighbors without regard to race, color, religion or national origin. And, Paul taught that "enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions and factions" are among many works of the flesh that are antithetical to the kingdom of God. "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5: 19-23) These works of the Spirit lead to peace-making

and the kingdom of God.

The Social Principles of our United Methodist Church are a clarion call and powerful witness in times such as these. "We affirm that no identity or culture has more legitimacy than any other. We call the Church to challenge any hierarchy of cultures or identities." (Para. 161A, The Nurturing Community, page 110, 2016 Book of Discipline). And, from Para. 162A The Social Community, page 120: "Racism, manifested as sin, plagues and hinders our relationship with Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself ... Therefore, we recognize racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons ... We commit as the Church to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access."

Read the rest of Bishop Ough's statement at <http://bit.ly/BishopOughreCharlottesville>.