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Presbyterians respond to spring storms

In the past few days we have seen severe and devastating storms ravage the Midwestern, Southern, and Eastern United States. During April 2011, more than 300 tornadoes were confirmed. As we pray for all who have been affected by these events, we remember that "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 124:8) and call on the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom "even the winds and sea obey" (Matthew 8:27).

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is already responding to the need. The Office of Theology and Worship has provided resources for prayer and worship in such a time as this.

Especially hard hit were states in the South. April 27 tornadoes caused 130 deaths in Alabama alone. Lives were also lost in Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia, bringing the preliminary total to about 200. That number is expected to rise, officials said. North Carolina experienced its worst tornado outbreak in 25 years over the Palm Sunday weekend. Flooding is also taking a toll in several states, with record flooding of major rivers and levee breaches reported.

PDA Response

One Great Hour of Sharing and designated funds from PDA are already at work in at least 11 presbyteries this spring as they address disasters within their areas.

At the request of the 11 presbyteries in 10 states, members of the PDA National Response Team (NRT) are working to help leaders as they organize their response for local communities. PDA is monitoring a number of additional presbyteries in case a need for assistance arises. A number of NRT members are on stand-by status.

An NRT member shared that one presbytery executive was worried about what was expected of him. He was reassured when told that what was expected of him was to pastor, support, and bless the pastors in his presbytery. He was told that long term recovery management belongs to the community, and that volunteer leadership would arise

naturally over the course of time. He was also told that PDA is there to support him and the presbytery over the long haul.

How you can help

You can help the church in this response and stand in the GAP for those affected by these storms.

GIVE.

The generous sharing of your financial blessings through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering and special designated giving provides resources needed to assist with immediate emergency needs, long-term and unmet needs, and spiritual/emotional counseling.

Individuals may give by phone at (800) 872-3283, through your congregation, online, or by mailing a check to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700 (please include DR000015 on your check to support response to disasters in the United States.)

ACT.

- CLEAN UP BUCKETS are needed. Please consider assembling buckets to assist families as they begin the overwhelming task of storm and flood clean up.
- Download a bulletin insert "Clean Up Buckets Needed" to share with your congregation from the PDA web site www.pcusa.org/pda.
- Register your team's interest in future rebuilding possibilities. Call (866) 732-6121.
- Stay informed and share information about the need with others. Sign up to receive PDA Rapid Information Network (PDA-RIN) email notices to alert you of additional needs.

PRAY.

Creator of the wind and water, thank you for your ever-presence with us.

Please be with your children who are displaced by the recent storms, who have lost loved ones, or who will need to begin the tasks of cleaning up or rebuilding their homes. May the light of your hope and the power of your love shine through your church as we stand with those in need.

For the grace of your Son, which is sufficient for our every need, we give you thanks. Amen.

Additional Worship Resources available on the PDA web site: hymn, prayers, and bulletin insert about the spring storms.

