



## **Episcopal Relief & Development to Assist Victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma**

Episcopal Relief & Development is currently working with the dioceses in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, East Tennessee, Western North Carolina and North Carolina to assess damage and determine needs. Please consider a donation to the Episcopal Relief and Development Hurricane Relief Fund by donating online line at <https://support.episcopalrelief.org/hurricane-relief> or sending a donation to:

### **Episcopal Relief & Development**

#### **Hurricane Relief Fund**

**P.O. Box 7058**

**Merrifield, VA 22116-7058**

**Indicate on your check: Hurricane Relief Fund**

**Also please provide your Diocese, Parish and City**

### **Help us be where we're needed**

Your gift provides our partners on the ground with critical supplies, such as food and water for communities devastated by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma and other storms. You'll also help us empower communities to not only prepare for emergencies, but assist with the long-term efforts needed to rebuild and heal.

Bulletin Inserts-Full Page

<https://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploaded/files/Church-In-Action/Worship%20Resources/Hurricane%20Relief%202017/Hurricane-Relief-Insert-FP-2017.pdf>

Bulletin Inserts

full page English [\(PDF\)](#) [\(JPG\)](#)

half page English [\(PDF\)](#) [\(JPG\)](#)

[Ready to Serve](#) Ways to Volunteer



September 11, 2017

## Hurricane Irma Devastates Florida and the Caribbean

Hurricane Irma, now downgraded to a tropical storm, made landfall in Florida on Sunday after cutting a devastating path through the Caribbean. This is the second devastating storm of the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season, following Harvey which hit Texas two weeks ago. Irma and Harvey, both Category 4 storms when they hit the US, set a record as the only two Atlantic hurricanes of this magnitude to make landfall in the continental US during the same year.

Irma, a powerful 400 mile wide storm, turned the streets of Miami and other cities into rivers. Two construction cranes collapsed in Miami as a result of high winds. The Florida Keys, a small chain of low lying islands connected by bridges, was the hardest hit with homes, vehicles and roads left underwater. According to FEMA, over six million people throughout Florida are without power and some may be without power for weeks. Six deaths have been reported in Florida with at least 37 deaths reported in the Caribbean.

"Communications remain a challenge for our partners," said Abigail Nelson, Episcopal Relief & Development's Senior Vice President of Programs. "While cell service is available in some areas, there are still major power issues in both Florida and the Caribbean."

For safety reasons, impacted dioceses will not be able to assess property damage in their communities for at least several days. "Safety is paramount and we urge all to remain sheltered until local authorities advise that it is safe to venture outside before assessments begin," continued Nelson.

Katie Mears, Director of the US Disaster Program, is in regular communication with dioceses in Florida, Georgia and the Gulf Coast. AlertMedia, a text based program, has helped select diocesan leaders and staff contact and share information within their dioceses.

"I'm holding all those in the impacted area in my prayers, and I'm confident in the leadership skills in these congregations and dioceses. They have responded to disasters for many years, and have learned from those experiences," said Mears.

"We have been working with the dioceses in Florida and in other higher hazard areas of the country for several years, not only to equip the individual dioceses, but to strengthen the relationships between the dioceses," she continued. "Our team has convened quarterly calls for the region and daily calls since last Thursday, and moving forward, allowing dioceses to support each other and get information from us quickly and efficiently."

Irma is not over yet. Dangerous conditions exist throughout Florida including heavy winds, storm surges, tornado warnings, flooded roads and downed power lines. [The National Hurricane Center](#) reports that Irma would bring "life threatening wind impacts to much of Florida regardless of the exact track of the center." As Irma moves up the coast to Georgia, Alabama and the Carolinas later today, it is possible to get up to 25 inches of rain.

Before reaching Florida, Irma caused major destruction and damage throughout the Caribbean as a Category 5 storm. Haiti was spared a direct hit but Irma's impact has been devastating to its infrastructure, destroying homes, farmland and the roads connecting smaller communities with larger cities.

Extensive damage from Hurricane Irma devastated most of the US Virgin Islands with four deaths reported. In the Dominican Republic, more than 2,000 homes were damaged and while Puerto Rico skirted a direct hit, thousands of people are without water, power, and cell phone service which presents communications issues there.

"Please pray for the many who have been impacted," said Nelson. "We are prepared, as we always have been, to support those who need our help the most."

The 2017 Atlantic Hurricane season ends on November 30th with the [National Weather Service](#) predicting two to five major hurricanes this season. Hurricane Jose may pose a threat to the East Coast but its path is uncertain. High surf and rip currents may affect parts of the northeast Caribbean and the eastern coast of the US in the coming weeks.

Contributions to Episcopal Relief & Development's [Hurricane Relief Fund](#) will help support church and other local partners as they provide critical emergency assistance to those most in need in weeks and days ahead.

*Prayer for Those Affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma*

*We stand with you, but not only we. The Lord who sacrificed His life for us all and was raised from the dead is with you. Remember that we are your brothers and sisters, and we're in this together. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you His peace, this day, and forever more. Amen.*

*— Presiding Bishop Michael Curry*