



Hurricane Katrina Response

Comfort, O Comfort my people...

Isaiah 40:1

The Presbytery's Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) Team has been hard at work coordinating responses between congregations and FEMA, GEMA, the Red Cross, and dozens of other agencies, and of course our denomination's Disaster Assistance program. Our PDA Team is "plugged in" to the official response networks and has been called upon in some very significant ways to assist evacuees who have been displaced by Katrina into the greater Atlanta area. As the scope of the disaster continues to unfold, our coordinated response will be most helpful. Following are opportunities and suggestions for immediate assistance and strategies for preparing for longer-term responses.

Immediate Needs

Warehouse Space / Churches with Unused Rooms

Local warehouse space or even space in churches with unused rooms (classrooms, stage, meeting room, etc.) in which donated items can be stored and distributed.

Temporary Housing

Short-term (3-6 month) and long-term (6 months +)

Furniture

Beds, tables, lamps, chairs, sofas, televisions, etc.

Household Items

Pots & pans, dishes & eating utensils, bed linens, bath linens, paper products (paper towels, toilet paper, etc.), soap, laundry detergent

Transportation

Volunteers with car, pickup truck, church van, etc. to provide various transportation needs (doctor visits, trip to social service agency, moving furniture, moving from shelter to new home, etc.)

Churches with Food Pantry

Food items for families in shelters, temporary housing, and families providing shelter for evacuees.

Employment Services & Opportunities

People with expertise in resume writing and employment transition. Available job and employment opportunities.

Pastoral Care

Stephen Ministers, Pastors, and Counselors to provide spiritual and emotional support.

"Mentor" or "Resettlement" Churches

Congregations willing to help a family through the resettlement process (3-6 months). This would be assisting a single family with a wide variety of needs.

"Sister Churches"

There are 80 Presbyterian churches in the Gulf Coast region that sustained significant damage from hurricane Katrina. It is our hope to establish "Sister Church" relationships with each of these congregations with churches in our Presbytery. The relationship can include everything from regular prayer in worship to sending work teams (if and when that is appropriate). Members of that congregation might visit your church as well. Building and demonstrating a supportive relationship as part of the Presbyterian family is the goal.

Some of us might already have a connection with a particular church that was affected -- you might want to request that church to be the one that you have a "Sister" relationship with.

Important Contact Information

Presbytery PDA Coordinator: Betty Saye

Presbytery Outreach Ministry Team Chair: Jeff Peterson-Davis

Presbytery PDA Phone: 404-898-0711 ext. 160

Presbytery PDA email: pda.atl@presbyteryofgreateratl.org

Presbytery PDA website: link from www.presbyteryofgreateratl.org

Presbytery Staff: Cassandra Morrow, Assoc. Executive
Gay Alston, Administrative Assistant

PC(USA) PDA Phone: 888-728-7228 ext. 5839

PC(USA) PDA email: pda@pcusa.org

PC(USA) PDA website: www.pcusa.org/pda

Work Groups

Work groups in Gulf Coast areas will **definitely be needed!** But affected communities are not yet prepared to receive volunteer work teams. Consider that most communities are still struggling to find housing and resources for their residents, most of whom would gladly return to repair their own homes if they were allowed to do so. But there are opportunities for Work Groups:

NOW

Local Work Teams

Teams are needed now to work on local homes that have been made available for displaced families. These homes need to be cleaned, painted, and brought into “move-in” condition as soon as possible.

Gulf Coast Work Teams

Every agency is advising us not to send teams to the affected area yet. However, it is not too early to begin recruiting leaders, generating interest, and taking inventory of gifts and skills in your group.

For small churches or congregations not able to form a full work group, our PDA Team is willing to help connect you with other groups to form a single team.

Please Register Your Work Group

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is encouraging congregations to register their groups as soon as possible. All that is needed is the name of a contact person and basic information about the type of work your group is willing to do. Register online: www.pcusa.org/katrina/volunteer or by phone: 866-732-6121.

In addition, please register your group with the Presbyterian PDA (contact info on front).

LATER

Work Team Destinations

Some congregations will use their own contacts to determine where they want to send work teams. One of the services PDA provides is helping to match work teams with appropriate work sites. Registering with PDA and with the Presbyterian PDA Team will help coordinate sites with greatest need with teams that can best help meet those needs.

Work with Sister Congregations

The Sister Congregations will be another source for Work Team projects. Some Sister Congregations will need work teams to assist with reconstruction projects on their church facilities. Others will need work teams to assist in rebuilding the homes of their members or homes of people affected within their communities.

Financial Contributions

The generosity of our members is staggering. We do not yet have an approximate total of funds contributed so far to Katrina relief by our congregations, though what we are hearing is that once again our members are responding with open hearts and open pocketbooks.

\$100,000 Challenge, \$10 Million Goal

Presbytery Moderator Pro-Tem, Charles Easley, issued a challenge to our churches to raise \$100,000 for relief aid toward a denominational goal of \$10 million.

Together in Mission

We would like to know how we have responded and if we have met the challenge. Please communicate with the Presbytery PDA Team (contact info on front) information about funds you have raised and how you intend to use those funds (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, local relief efforts, other relief agencies). This is not to “check up on you” -- it is to coordinate our efforts and to share with one another how together we as a Presbytery are able to respond as faithful disciples. We will communicate all of this information to our congregations.

How to Contribute

In order to coordinate the Presbytery's efforts and to ensure that your congregation's participation is recorded, it is recommended that your contributions to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance be sent through the Presbytery office. 100% of your contributions are sent to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and 100% of funds donated are used for hurricane relief. There are no administrative or program costs taken from these funds. Please put the following information on your check: “Acct #DR-000169 Hurricane Katrina” and mail to:

Presbytery of Greater Atlanta
Attn: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance & Response
1024 Ponce de Leon Avenue
Atlanta, GA 30306

Presbytery's Role

Presbytery's role is to *coordinate* and *facilitate* the resources available in our congregations. Our PDA Team has been involved in high-level response implementation at the state level. In order to most effectively engage the resources of our congregations, a coordinated effort is essential. The only way to do that is if we communicate with each other. Our PDA Team functions as a “resource manager” -- knowing what our congregations have available and helping to match those with the needs that are presented daily. Together we are making a difference in people's lives and witnessing to the love and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ.