



## **Diocesan Response to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria**

### ***An Update from Bishop Gregory O. Brewer***

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! After weeks of being in a constant state of alert as we followed every twist and turn of the destructive paths of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, I begin today by expressing my ongoing concern for and commitment to each and every one of you in the Diocese of Central Florida and to all of our impacted brothers and sisters in Texas, Louisiana, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

Many of you have, rightfully, inquired about what our diocesan response to these hurricanes has been to date and what it will be moving forward. My aim is to share with you an update addressing both of these questions but, first, let me start by letting you know how you can help in our hurricane relief efforts in the immediate term.

#### **Donate Financially to Hurricane & Disaster Relief**

While there are a variety of opportunities to participate in relief activities such as clothing and food drives – and I do wholeheartedly encourage you to take part in such efforts – where we need your help the most right now is through financial donations. There are a variety of ways you can give:

1. **By Check** – Make checks payable to “Diocese of Central Florida” with “Hurricane Relief” in the memo line and mail to the Diocese of Central Florida, 1017 E. Robinson St., Orlando, FL 32801.
2. **By Credit Card (Online)** – In the top right corner of the Home Page of the diocesan website, [www.cfdiocese.org](http://www.cfdiocese.org), there is a red “Donations” button. From the “Donations” drop down menu you can select Disaster Relief, Hurricane Irma, Caribbean Relief Fund or Puerto Rico Relief Fund.
3. **By Credit Card (Text)** – Text code “DCF Disaster”, “DCF Irma”, “DCF CRF” or “DCF PRRF” to the number “73256”. CRF and PRRF stand for Caribbean Relief Fund and Puerto Rico Relief Fund, respectively. Be sure to leave a space between “DCF” and the code which follows it.

Monies given online or by text towards “Disaster Relief” or by check towards “Hurricane Relief” will be distributed by the Diocesan Board and me where we determine the need to be greatest.

#### **Hurricanes Irma and Maria Relief**

Our diocesan churches and parishioners did suffer great losses at the hands of Hurricane Irma. Nearly 30% of our churches have filed insurance claims and cleanup will be a long road for many. We at the diocesan office have been in touch with our clergy and lay leadership throughout Hurricane Irma and will remain involved until the final repair is made. Deacon John Motis has been instrumental as our

Diocesan Disaster Relief Coordinator by participating in regular check-in calls with Episcopal Relief & Development, assisting with grant applications for ministries at our churches hardest hit by Irma and arranging for machinery and tools for debris collection at Camp Wingmann and around the diocese.

In the Caribbean and Puerto Rico, the devastation of Hurricanes Irma and Maria is still being calculated. Loss of life and livelihood and insufficient resources and supplies are all contributing to unimaginable conditions. As several people from the Caribbean have shared with me, they know what it is like to live through and deal with the aftermath of a hurricane. Most of them, however, have never seen one of the magnitude of Irma or Maria. In light of this, I have asked the Rev. Chris Brathwaite to organize a relief effort along with Ms. Krisita Jackson, our Diocesan Coordinator for Episcopal Relief & Development, to assist in the Caribbean – namely the U.S. Virgin Islands - in any way meaningful and as the shipping facilities of airports and seaports will allow. Rev. Brathwaite reports that our diocese is almost ready with barrels of supplies specifically for infants and children to be sent to the Rev. Gregory Gibson on St. Croix and to Bishop Ambrose Gumbs on St. Thomas. Your financial donations to “Caribbean Relief Fund” via the options listed earlier in this communication will help make the shipping of these barrels possible.

There is also a great deal of groundwork being laid by our diocesan Hispanic Commission under the leadership of the Rev. Jose Rodriguez and by a newly-formed diocesan Ad Hoc Committee on Displaced Persons from U.S. Territories in the Caribbean spearheaded by the Very Rev. Sarah Bronos. Recommendations will be forthcoming from these two groups regarding what relief our diocese can provide to Puerto Ricans and Virgin Islanders both in their homelands and here in Central Florida as more and more displaced persons from these islands seek refuge.

#### **Hurricane Harvey Relief**

I am grateful to the number of people from around our diocese who donated funds so generously towards Hurricane Harvey Relief. The money collected at our diocesan office totaled \$3,624.37 and is being sent to the Episcopal Church of St. John the Divine in Houston where its Rector, the Rev. Clay Lein, and members of his staff including Revs. Charlie Holt and Louise Samuelson are embarking on tremendous community outreach in the wake of Harvey.

Additional information, as it becomes available, will be distributed about continued relief efforts and how you can help. I remain grateful for each and every one of you and ask that you keep our diocese and all of those impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria in your prayers.

Grace to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory O. Brewer", with a small cross symbol to the left of the first letter.

**The Rt. Rev. Gregory O. Brewer**  
Bishop, Diocese of Central Florida

*September 29, 2017, Orlando, Florida*