



**Mississippi Conference**  
of The United Methodist Church

## The Circuit Rider

Published August 28, 2012

### **SPECIAL EDITION** for The Mississippi Conference of The United Methodist Church

#### **Greetings!**

Welcome to another SPECIAL EDITION of The Circuit Rider. This entire issue serves as a Disaster Response Update in hopes to assist you as you prepare for Hurricane Isaac.

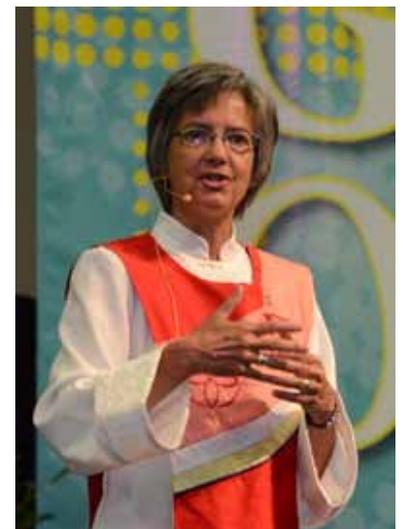


#### **From Bishop Hope Morgan Ward** Preparing for Isaac

As we watch the weather maps, we offer prayers for all in the path of Isaac.

Our Mississippi disaster response leadership is fully prepared to respond to the needs of any impacted in Our state. Please go to the conference website for disaster response information updates.

If our neighboring states are impacted, we will be ready to respond with prayers, supplies and work teams. Thank you for working with volunteers to be ready to engage any needed response.



In this week, the seventh anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, we remember the energy of the United Methodist connection in disaster response.

Thank you for inviting an offering for disaster response this Sunday, September 2, or at other times very soon. As we give through The Advance, we join with all United Methodists in essential ministries in the wake of storms.

I send this message from Raleigh, where we are moving into the episcopal residence.

*With gratitude for all our life together in Mississippi in Christ,*

**Hope Morgan Ward**

## **From Rev. Heather Hensarling Seashore District**

As Isaac hovers in the gulf and looms over the Mississippi and Louisiana coasts I am at Lake Junaluska for D.S. Orientation. My heart, however, remains on the Gulf Coast and was comforted this morning as we sang the following beautiful words. A coincidence? There are no coincidences!

*As a mother stills her child,  
thou canst hush the ocean wild.  
Wondrous sovereign of the sea,  
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.*

Leaders in the Seashore District and around the conference have moved rapidly to prepare for the worst while praying for the best. Clergy along the coast have confirmed that our local church Disaster Readiness Plans are being enacted. Shelters at Camp Love, Heritage in Biloxi, and other locales are ready to receive those who may need to evacuate.

Churches in every district in the conference are preparing in a variety of ways from collecting supplies to being a drop-off point for supplies and even housing evacuees and volunteers. The preparedness list goes on and on! What a deep blessing to know we are proactive in this ministry to help aid Mississippi as well as our brothers and sisters in Alabama and Louisiana! Though we do not yet have a full knowledge of the future of Isaac it is good to know that we are putting our plan in place, and, most importantly that the God who “canst hush the ocean wild” is with us and in control.

As we wait and pray let us be mindful of the thousands who live life with no permanent shelter at all, and let us be mindful of those whose economic circumstances limit their options during this time. While it appears that Isaac’s threat is lessening along our Mississippi Gulf Coast, let us remain vigilant and hold in prayer our neighbors to the west.

*With thanksgiving for the work of so many and thanksgiving for the hands of our Pilot,*

**Reverend Heather Hensarling**

## **MSCOR UPDATE: Hurricane Isaac**

Wayne Napier/Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and Beth Dean, MSCOR Program Coordinator participated in a conference call with the District Disaster Response Coordinators discussing priorities and responsibilities. The districts have forwarded information related to supplies and abilities to Wayne and Beth. Scott Wright/Seashore District and Keith Gaughf/Brookhaven District have been in contact since the path of Isaac has shifted. Robert Sharp and his disaster recovery team is also in place and working with Scott. All clergy who plan to evacuate are encouraged to contact their district offices and provide contact information. Camps at Nugent UMC and Heritage UMC are available in the Seashore District for pastors and their families should there be a need to evacuate. Camp Wesley Pines is available in the Brookhaven District for pastors and their families. All facilities request that any evacuees bring linens/pillows/towels. Keith Gaughf also

noted that damage assessments to church and parsonage properties need to be done as soon as it is safe to do so. Please notify the district office and the district disaster coordinator.

At present time, all were encouraged to watch and wait. Thanks to each district disaster coordinator for all their efforts. Early preparation and smart planning helps to lessen the effect of a disaster. It also promotes a more secure feeling when everyone knows they are prepared.

Here's a reminder for churches of what needs to be done before the storm arrives:

- How will you contact your membership, particularly if power or phone service is disrupted?
- How will you help yourself and your congregation evacuate or prepare if the storm threatens your area?
- How will you secure and back up your church records?
- How will your church be a "mission station"?
- How will you partner with neighboring churches?
- How will you tell your story?
- Do you have adequate insurance for all church facilities, including parsonage, and do you know how to contact your insurance carrier?
- Clergy, is your personal emergency contact information (including your cell number and your e-mail address) up-to-date with the conference and your district office?
- Do you know the list of emergency items and essential supplies to request/collect before and following a storm? (Hint: No clothes!)
- How are you preparing for the next disaster/storm season?

Corrections to the District Coordinators' list are noted below. If there are additions or corrections that still need to be made, please contact send an email to [beth@mississippi-umc.org](mailto:beth@mississippi-umc.org) so we can get the corrected information.

- **Brookhaven:** Keith Gaughf; [keith@ecclergy.net](mailto:keith@ecclergy.net); 601-731-8235
- **East/West Jackson:** Chuck Meador; [cmeador@christunitedjxn.org](mailto:cmeador@christunitedjxn.org); 601-953-7696
- **Greenwood:** Rev. Stephen Sparks; [pastorindianola@bellsouth.net](mailto:pastorindianola@bellsouth.net); 662-610-3933
- **Hattiesburg:** Brian Gordon; [bgordon72@aol.com](mailto:bgordon72@aol.com); 601-283-9942
- **Meridian:** Kenneth Owen; [kenneth\\_cpumc@bellsouth.net](mailto:kenneth_cpumc@bellsouth.net); 601-917-8717
- **New Albany:** Rev. Jim Petermann; [jpetermann@ecclergy.net](mailto:jpetermann@ecclergy.net); 662-816-3985
- **Seashore:** Rev/Dr. Scott Wright; [broscott@clergy.net](mailto:broscott@clergy.net); 228-218-4391
- **Senatobia:** Rev. Andy Cotten; [padresac@gmail.com](mailto:padresac@gmail.com); 662-313-4446
- **Starkville:** Barry Rushing; [blr\\_605@yahoo.com](mailto:blr_605@yahoo.com); 662-552-7007
- **Tupelo:** Rev. Darrell Sanderson; [donkeydarrell@gmail.com](mailto:donkeydarrell@gmail.com); 662-231-0075

Once Isaac has made landfall, the damage to each district will be assessed. As conference Disaster Response Coordinator, Wayne will also be in touch with our brothers and sisters in Louisiana to offer our assistance. Because the main expectation is flooding, Wayne has requested that each district begin making plans to produce clean up kits quickly and efficiently. Please do not begin preparing them until asked. The complete list for cleaning kits can be found on the UMCOR website using the link "relief kits".

Finally, as Isaac approaches, we need to remember that the local community/district owns the disaster. No one is to go into a disaster area until they have been invited by the District. Deployment outside of one's own district will be generated through Wayne to David Newton and Beth Dean. Please do not strike out on your own. Be patient and wait. If we are needed, we will be called.

Continue to listen to weather alerts, emergency management alerts, and any others that are appropriate. The hardest part of hurricane readiness is the actual waiting out the storm. While it is a blessing to have such advance notice, it also heightens the anxieties. Storm alerts increase the fear. They also cause us to remember what we were doing seven years ago and what we came home to find. These alerts also make us want to reach out and help others who may find themselves in the

same situation we were in following Katrina. God is using this time to remind us that He has this in His hands. This is our lesson in patience. We are to wait. Deep breath... Remember that God has this and WE ARE PREPARED.

Pray for each other without ceasing. Give thanks for His many blessings. Be Joyful. We are His and He has called us for service.

*In His Service,*

**Beth Dean, MSCOR Program Coordinator**

**Wayne Napier, Conference Disaster Coordinator**

**From Rev. Tom Hazlewood**  
***Assistant General Secretary***  
***UMCOR Disaster Response U.S.,***  
***Caribbean, Latin America***

With each passing hurricane season, I believe that we as United Methodist are more and more prepared to respond if, God forbid, we are hit with another Katrina-like hurricane.

We are better prepared because we now have more than 10,000 United Methodist volunteers who have taken our Early Response Training and have an UMCOR badge signifying they are ready to respond. We have, week-by-week, met with local congregations and walked them through our Connecting Neighbors local church preparedness training. We have continued to modify and update our case management, our signature one-on-one disaster ministry. Finally, we are better prepared because the most disaster-prone Annual Conferences have made disaster preparedness an important part of the conference agenda.

With all these advancements in our preparedness, along with the knowledge we have gained from experience and the amazing support that continually flows from every church pew across the United States, we have the best resources to answer the call when nature hands us the worst of circumstances.

Finally, as a faith-based disaster organization, we at UMCOR know that all that we do and all that we are is undergirded by our faith in Jesus Christ. Our ministry is an outflow of God's work in creation and Christ's work in us. While we work in response to our relationship with a Holy God, we respect the dignity of all persons and never force our beliefs on others, nor is our help ever dependent upon the belief, ethnicity, income, or stance of the recipient. We truly live out the Wesleyan call: "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as you ever can."

## **How to Report an Insurance Claim**

While we hope there will be no damage done by the Hurricane Isaac and its remnants, I want to remind you of how to report a claim. The Conference Wide Insurance program has the adjustors ready to receive claims and begin their adjustment work. You will need to call A J Gallagher Risk Managers at **601-956-5810** or **800-960-4992**. You will need to tell them you are a participant in the Mississippi Conference United Methodist Insurance Program and you have a claim to report. They will ask which district you are in and your church name and physical location. The contact should be the Trustee Chair or pastor. They will receive your information and get your claim started.

If you are not in the Mississippi Conference United Methodist Insurance Program, then you will need to contact your agent that provides your policy. The conference treasurer's office will not have information related to filing those claims but stands ready to help you in any way that they can.