

Christian Church of N.C.



Hurricane Recovery Task Force News Update

December Reflection

by Rev. Annell George-McLawnhorn

Luke 2:1-7 New International Version (NIV)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.



This Advent Season I have been thinking a lot about Mary and Joseph. What a lousy time for Caesar Augustus to decree a census! Poor Mary was 9 months pregnant, but circumstances demanded she leave her home and go to be counted. Of course, as luck would have it, Mary went into labor! Away from the comforts and familiarity of her own home, away from friends and relatives to give her support and lend a helping hand, Mary gave birth to Jesus. I feel certain, Mary would have preferred to be in her own home town, in a place she loved, surrounded by friends and family. But the love of God could not wait for all to be perfect and right. The love of God came barreling into the world inside a stable in Bethlehem because all the Inns were full, and the child bearer was displaced.

This Christmas, in North Carolina, we still have so many families who are displaced from their homes and their communities. Additionally, we have congregations who cannot worship in their own facilities and they do not know when they will be able to return. It may be tempting to write this off as the worst Christmas ever! But it is in times exactly like these that God comes barreling into our world to bring us hope and courage for the journey. God has touched our lives through the outpouring of generosity and compassion. God is with us and with those who are displaced speaking a word of promise and joy. Emmanuel, God with Us. This year, may you be blessed by the Christ Child who comes into our midst at the very moments when we are the most vulnerable and the most in need.

Shalom, Peace - Annell

You Are Not Forgotten!

Recovering from a disaster can be a lonely experience, especially when it seems like everyone else is going about life as normal. We would like to take this moment to let you know that you are not forgotten. We continue to pray for you and we continue to work for you. And we will continue to be here for you as long as you need us.

Need hymnals?

A Disciple congregation in Va has a number of old Chalice hymnals that they are willing to donate to a congregation in need from Hurricane Florence.

For more information contact
DisasterResponseCCNC@gmail.com

Week of Compassion is still working hard!

Week of Compassion still has solidarity grants available. If your church building or church members' homes sustained damage during Florence, please notify the Regional Office, the Regional Disaster Response Team (disasterresponseccnc@gmail.com), or Caroline Hamilton-Arnold (Associate Director of Week of Compassion, caroline@weekofcompassion.org).

FEMA Appeals

A denial on your FEMA application is not necessarily the end of the road! Denials can occur for a wide variety of reasons, from missing paperwork to a typo in your address to the wording of an answer. The resources linked below give some tips for appealing the FEMA decision.

www.disasterlegalaid.org/legalhelp/item.5466-Appeal_Your_FEMA_Decision

Disaster Legal Aid Hurricane Florence Hotline:
1-833-242-3549

Emotional and Mental Health:

During the holiday season, feelings of grief and anxiety can become more pronounced. It is not uncommon for folks who have been through a disaster or traumatic event to feel disconnected or uninterested in celebrating. The season can amplify stress and negative feelings, so be gentle with yourselves and one another.

If you need help, please reach out to someone. Often, you just need someone to listen and someone to lean on.

The Disaster Distress Helpline has 24/7 crisis counseling: Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

National Benevolent Association (a general ministry of the Disciples of Christ) has created a series of videos and blog posts focused on mental health during the holidays, which you can find here: <https://www.nbaca.org/care-resources/2018-advent-resources>

Remember, you are not alone. Your Disciples family is here to help.

Looking For Ways to Help Others?

There are many ways to help others recover from this disaster. Some will be able to physically serve, others intellectually or emotionally, and others financially. How can you serve?

Paper work, paper work, paper work! Half the battle of recovery is often the paperwork.

Forms to fill out, documents to provide, estimates and itemizations, follow up information requested and it goes on and on. When you are already frazzled and emotionally drained from experiencing personal loss in a disaster, it is often the mundane things - like paperwork - that seem insurmountable.



Perhaps you can help. Would you be willing to offer assistance in helping someone navigate the system? It may be by telephone call or in person on a pre-scheduled Saturday.

Please contact Rev. Karen Kelly to add your name to the list of volunteers. pastorkarenwfcc@gmail.com

Week of Compassion continues to meet the needs of our community and is now working with long-term recovery groups in multiple counties to provide financial support for community-wide recovery. We are in conversation with Disciples Volunteering, Camp Caroline, and leadership in Pamlico County to support home repairs and rebuilds.

Can you make a donation to support their work? Donations can be made online at www.weekofcompassion.org



Organize your volunteer groups now to help with recovery and rebuilding efforts.

Visit www.discipleshomemissions.org for information or contact Josh Baird, Director, Disciples Volunteering at (985) 778-6915

Happy New Year to All!