



The Florida Conference
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Disaster Recovery Ministry



JULY 2023

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Disaster Recovery Ministry Updates

Early Response Training

The presence of Early Response Team volunteers in the immediate aftermath of a disaster are critical to the overall recovery and healing of affected communities. Their importance cannot be overstated. We saw this once again this past year with Ian, Nicole, and the flooding in the Ft Lauderdale area. Florida ERTs were supported by volunteers from as far away as California.

The mission of an Early Response Team is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster. These teams are neither a first response group of emergency workers nor a recovery rebuild or repair team; rather they fill a specific need in the early days after a disaster to establish the presence of the church.

Early Response Teams are intended to be small (7 to 12 people), self-sufficient and self-sustaining, with specialized skills for early response. While there are specific tasks assigned to early response teams, no task is more important than the people they serve.

Our next ERT Basic Class is scheduled for August 19, 8 AM to 4 PM, at the Homosassa United Methodist Church, 8831 W Bradshaw, Homosassa. For more information about Early Response Teams contact Tom Vencuss (tvencuss@flumc.org) or complete the registration form below and you will be contacted.

Ongoing Recovery Efforts

Our team is making progress in the Hurricane Ian recovery efforts in Southwest Florida. So far, the funding committee has

successfully approved funding for 18 cases. Currently, there are 167 open cases, which include both 2022 tornado and Hurricane Ian survivors. We have also closed 36 cases related to these disasters. We've reached out to and connected with 2280 individuals in need of disaster relief assistance. However, to continue our work effectively, we still require more volunteers, especially for post-summertime efforts. All skill levels are welcome, and volunteers must be over 14 years old.

Your help and support will make a significant impact in helping communities recover and heal from the aftermath of these disasters. Join us in our mission to provide aid and assistance to those in need by becoming a part of our volunteer team. Please reach out to Jill Hockin, jhockin@flumc.org, for more information.



Upcoming Opportunities

ERT Certification Homosassa UMC: August 19, 2023 8:00AM - 4:00 PM

To register, visit

<https://florida-reg.brtaapp.com/ERTTrainingHomosassaUMC>

ERT Train the Trainer - August 2023

Must be a current ERT, if interested please contact Krista Cornelius kcornelius@flumc.org for more information.

Interested in hosting an ERT training? Contact Tom Vencuss, tvencuss@flumc.org to learn more.



Long Term Recovery Trainings

In June, we hosted two impactful training courses at the Conference office in Lakeland. This initiative enabled us to expand our team by welcoming several new staff members, including Disaster Case Managers, Volunteer and Construction Coordinators, and a Regional Administrative Assistant. We are excited about the growth and opportunities this brings to the ministry.

The first training course focused on case management, where both our current and new case managers came together to enhance their skills in disaster case management. This collaborative effort aimed to equip them with the necessary tools and knowledge to provide the best possible support to the survivors affected by Hurricane Ian. We understand the critical role that effective case management plays in helping those in need, and this training was a significant step in ensuring our team is well-prepared for the challenges ahead.

In facilitating this training, we were grateful for the invaluable partnership with UMCOR and the contribution of their two dedicated consultants. Their expertise and commitment added immense value to the training sessions, enriching the experience for our staff members.

Our volunteer and construction coordinators were also able to meet to learn the Disaster Recovery Ministry policies and standard operating procedures. As well as trainings on safety and determining needs from hurricane damages. While the disaster case manager is there to provide a partnership with the client, the Volunteer and Construction Coordinator is the point of contact for physical repair and volunteer work needs. Our Volunteer and Construction Coordinators are the supervision point for volunteers on site of a client's home.

The success of these training courses marks a milestone in our organization's growth and ability to respond to disasters effectively. We believe that investing in our team's development and fostering strong partnerships are essential in fulfilling our mission to aid and support disaster survivors.

Looking forward, we are confident that the skills and knowledge gained during these training courses will enable us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those impacted by disasters. As we continue to grow and evolve, we remain committed to providing exceptional support and assistance to communities in need. Together with our dedicated team and valued partners, we are ready to face the challenges ahead with renewed strength and determination.



Connect with Us

Church Presentations:

Our team would be happy to speak with your congregation about preparedness, response, and recovery. If you are interested, please reach out to Krista Cornelius at kcornelius@flumc.org

Weekly Disaster Recovery Updates: Visit the [Conference website](#) for weekly updates from Conference Staff on the Disaster Recovery efforts.

Donations: Your contributions can make a significant difference in helping us build resilience and provide timely assistance to those affected by unforeseen events. Whether it's through financial assistance or volunteering your time and skills, you can be a vital part of our disaster relief and preparedness efforts. <https://florida-reg.brtapp.com/DisasterRecoverySupport>



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