



# Restoring Hope

An NC Conference Disaster Ministries Update

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## *An NC Conference Disaster Ministries Update*

The NC Conference of The UMC has identified five conference emphases as we center on making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Throughout this update, you'll see how Disaster Ministries is fulfilling these emphases: Effective Leaders, Healthy Congregations, Congregations for Children, Anti-Racism, and Unity.



# Fast Facts

## **Long-Term Recovery Continues After Storms Impact Eastern NC**

### **Hurricane Matthew**

*October 8, 2016*

### **Hurricane Florence**

*September 14, 2018*

### **Hurricane Dorian**

*September 6, 2019*

**1,669 teams**

**21,825 volunteers**

**723,128 hours valued  
at \$18,389,145**

**686 completed homes**

**157 homes in progress**

**722+ homes waiting for repairs**

*As of September 2019*

# From Bishop Hope Morgan Ward

On the anniversary of a devastating hurricane, a child asked, “How much longer do we have to remember?” Hearing this question, our hearts ache: the impact of wind and water upon the lives of children, women and men continues, on and on.

Lament is the first spiritual movement of this hurricane anniversary: lament for hurt and harm, lament for all that we lost, lament for our vulnerability in the midst of forces that overwhelm us. The Psalms help us learn to lament honestly before God.

The Psalms also teach us gratitude, the second spiritual movement of this time: gratitude for help and hope, gratitude for all we have received and learned, gratitude for God’s gifts of strength and generosity.

Let us pause for appropriate lament and for appropriate gratitude as the third anniversary of Hurricane Matthew and the first anniversary of Hurricane Florence are upon us. We will honestly carry the heartache and the struggle as we do the work of healing and rebuilding.



On August 28, 2019, the Cabinet and I worked near Burgaw, insulating the home of the musical icon of the community, an elderly member of Jordan’s Chapel United Methodist Church. This brother in Christ has lived in his shed for a year. Nearby, families with children live in tents, waiting for resources to rebuild their homes and their lives.

Driving the major highways - Interstates 95 and 40 and 64 and 1 - it appears that all is well. However, we are summoned into the communities, invisible to speeding passers-by, who await our presence, generosity and help.

In this time of remembering, let us . . .

1. Offer an anniversary gift for hurricane recovery, support the Youth Storm Fund (matched up to \$500,000 by the Conference), and give generously at charge conferences this fall,
2. Organize work teams to contribute to the rebuilding of homes, and
3. Pray regularly for all who lament and wait, for all who lead and work in the long journey of recovery.

Together, we hope in the Lord from this time on and forevermore.

Bishop Hope Morgan Ward  
North Carolina Conference  
of The United Methodist Church



**O Lord, my heart is not lifted up,  
my eyes are not raised too high;  
I do not occupy myself with things  
too great and too marvelous for me.**

**But I have calmed  
and quieted my soul,  
like a weaned child with her mother;  
my soul is like the weaned child  
that is with me.**

**O Israel, hope in the Lord,  
from this time forth and forevermore.**

**- Psalm 131**



# Uniting in Response

Hurricane Florence devastated the state of North Carolina. Homes and lives were uprooted, leaving many without a place to seek shelter. Communities and organizations across North Carolina and the country came together to help others in need.

The North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church is one of the organizations that responded in the aftermath of the disaster. Disaster Ministries has been able to return 619 people home with the help of partners and volunteers from a variety of religious, ethnic, and racial cultures.

Bishop Ward challenged the Conference to “work together across lines of color and culture” to help others in need. In John Wesley’s sermon, “Catholic Spirit”, he stated:

*But although a difference in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may*

**Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived.  
Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.  
A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him,  
“Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”  
“Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.  
Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said,  
“Here are my mother and my brothers!  
Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”**

**- Mark 3:31-35**

*unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another in love and in good works. ([Text 4](#))*

Bishop Ward has seen Disaster Ministries work “with like-minded partners in a faith community and beyond a faith community.”

We have developed partnerships with churches, such as [St. James AME Zion](#) in Southport, NC, and organizations, like [Islamic Relief USA](#). Disaster Ministries and our partners have been able to unite in response.

Disaster Ministries recently partnered with St. James AME Zion. Pastor Patricia Smith and her congregation generously offered to host volunteer teams at the church.

St. James AME Zion recovered from the damage caused by Hurricane Florence and is now giving back to their community. We are so grateful to St. James AME Zion for their generous hospitality. Disaster Ministries hopes to continue our partnership with Pastor Smith and help those in the community who are still in need of assistance.

Islamic Relief USA and Disaster Ministries developed a partnership following Hurricane Matthew in 2016. Former Disaster Response Team leader, Hani Hamwi, brought teams to the Tarboro Disaster Response Center starting in June 2017, fostering a partnership with Tarboro Site Manager, Jason DuVall.

Over the course of eight months, Islamic Relief USA mucked out and repaired homes. Islamic Relief USA works in both disaster relief and long-term recovery to help “a community until it reaches a state of normalcy.” Minhaj Hassan, Public Affairs Specialist, hopes the partnership between Islamic Relief USA and Disaster Ministries will “show that different faith-based groups can work together harmoniously and achieve big results, such as helping a community that was devastated by major weather events to get back on its feet.”

Bishop Ward hopes Disaster Ministries, the Conference, and volunteers will “see all the people” through hurricane recovery work.

**“Persons who strive toward holiness of heart and life join with others to serve the world that God loves. Loving your neighbor as yourself means Christians join with Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, athiest, and agnostic neighbors who are willing to serve with and improve life for people who are poor, sick, oppressed, voiceless and marginalized by the world.”**

— [Steve Manskar](#)



# Energizing Grace: A Letter

Dear Mr. Miller,

This letter is to thank the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, all your Disaster Relief teams of volunteers, Wilmington, NC's congregation of Wesley Memorial UMC, and all the out-of-town church volunteers who answered the call for help after Hurricane Florence. I want to also thank two men in particular – Ed Gales and Steve Chiappisi – whose grace, inspiration, and tenacity in managing the massive undertaking of repairing our home, has been an ever-recurring miracle.

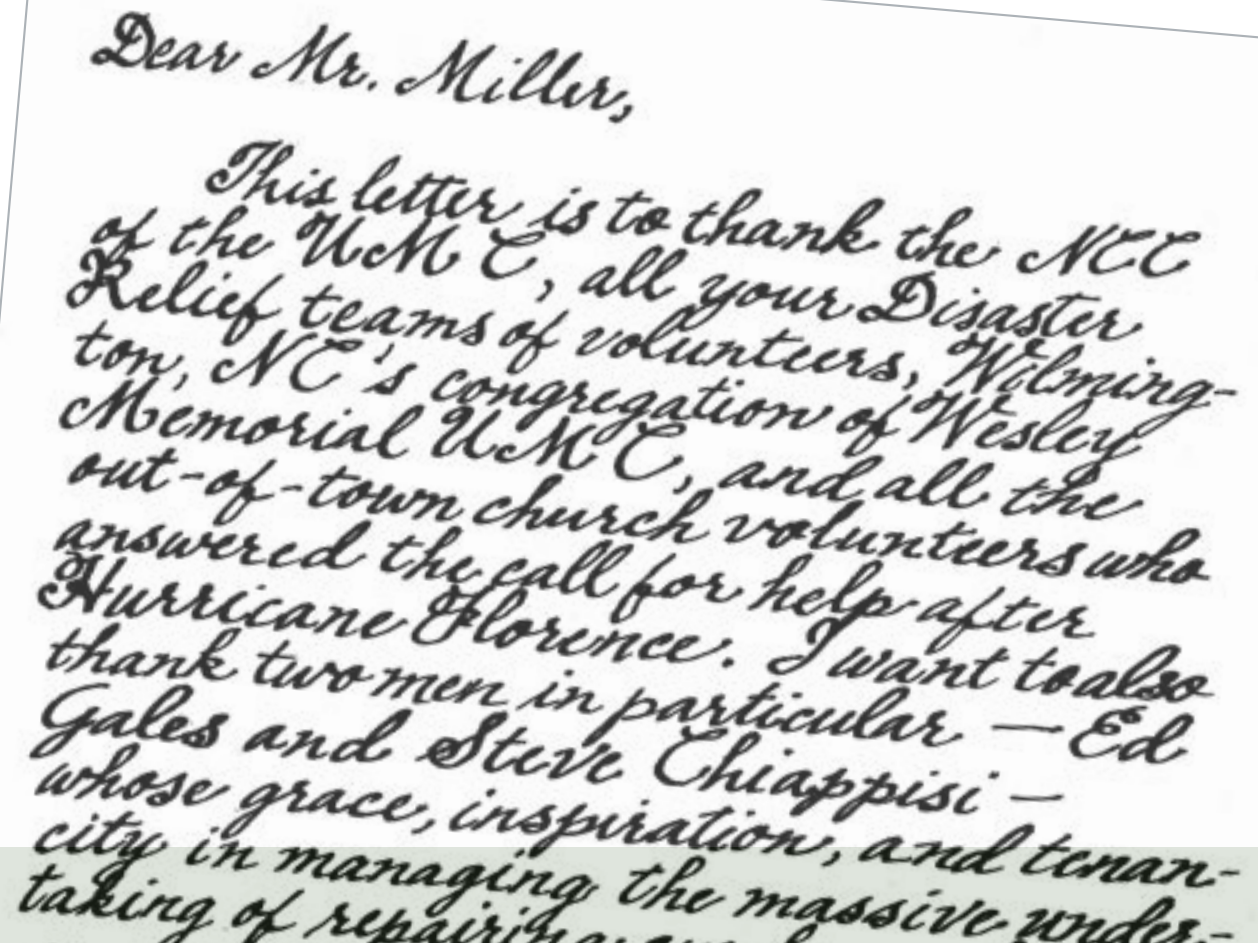
We live in a neighborhood, near the port on the Cape Fear River, of wood-framed duplexes built in the early years of World War II to house crucial shipbuilders. Now, after about 79 years, our neighborhood is poor, inhabited by many races, including many hard-working young immigrant families, and the aging and disabled, which includes my husband and me.

The majority of the old shipbuilders' houses were already in bad shape before Florence battered them further. As I'm sure you know, many families were abandoned by their insurance companies and only had FEMA to rely upon. We were rejected by both, told our house was still livable despite the black mold (making us sick), the destroyed HVAC ductwork (full of river rats), electrical and plumbing damage (had to rely on the YMCA to take a shower), and a yard full of fallen trees.

For months and months, my husband worked on applications for help, and on rejection appeals. Then, one day we happened to visit a local library where we noticed a sign that pointed to the New Hanover County Office of Disaster Relief. The lady there referred our case to you guys and, stunningly, there were no delays in your response! Ed Gales checked us out and in short order he showed up with about 20 volunteers – and that was just the beginning! The NCCUMC's response "turn[ed] denial into

acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity, [and] ... a house into a home." (Melody Beattie)

As happy as I was to see the volunteers, fear came with it. I had the fear of contempt and the judgment of being undeserving. But you exuded no "put-upon" attitude and accepted us as we are. You demonstrated that if one can accept the present as it is, and choose to stay open and creatively curious, you become the most vulnerable to a visitation of holy grace.



Dear Mr. Miller,

This letter is to thank the NCC of the UMC, all your Disaster Relief teams of volunteers, Wilmington, NC's congregation of Wesley Memorial UMC, and all the out-of-town church volunteers who answered the call for help after Hurricane Florence. I want to also thank two men in particular – Ed Gales and Steve Chiappisi – whose grace, inspiration, and tenacity in managing the massive undertaking of repairing our home,

Before the knowledge of Christ came along, the Native Americans learned about teamwork from the beaver. The beavers were the builders, the doers, showing harmony of the highest order without egos getting in the way. We benefitted as such from many different teams of volunteers.

What was so astonishingly impressive about these teams were the qualities that they all seemed to have in common: embracing within themselves all races, ages, and sexes; a continual gracious demeanor; acceptance of us; being non-judgmental; self-sustaining; no contemptuous or cursing language; good sense of humor; outstanding professionalism; hardworking day after day; promptness; willingness, benevolence, and kindness without expectation of recompense; joyful and delightful; and finally, to sum it all up, Christ-like.

I pray that in this letter, I have expressed my gratitude fully. That is why I included this picture of a home to show visually how I feel sitting within the results of all your efforts. Your energizing grace has undone a disastrous past in this present, and thus released the future. Thank you for the most magnificent gift we have ever had or ever hope to have in our lives.

*Nanciann and William Coffin*



## ***Get Involved***

Storm relief and recovery are ongoing. If you are interested in joining our team, please contact us today.

### **Early Response Team (CERT)**

Tarp roofs, spray for mold, and muck out homes! Early Response Teams are the first step in recovery. Sign up for the CERT training and learn how to respond to natural disasters.

### **Connecting Neighbors**

Be prepared before a natural disaster. Sign up for the Connecting Neighbors program to learn how to prepare your church and community in the event of a disaster.

### **Work Teams**

Interested in rebuilding, painting or repairing homes? Contact the Call Center to bring a team to a center near you! Volunteers do not have to be ERT-certified to assist with repairs. Youth groups are welcome to volunteer.

## **Disaster Ministries**

Call: [888-440-9167](tel:888-440-9167)

Email: [disaster@nccumc.org](mailto:disaster@nccumc.org)

Website: [nccumc.org/disaster](http://nccumc.org/disaster)

Facebook: [@nccdisaster](https://www.facebook.com/nccdisaster)

Twitter: [@nccdisaster](https://twitter.com/nccdisaster)

### **Volunteer in the Call Center**

Volunteer with us in the Call Center in Garner, NC by answering phone calls from volunteer teams and disaster survivors. Be the voice of hope for those in need!

### **UMCOR Kits**

Prepare hygiene, school, and cleaning kits. UMCOR kits are a great way to give to those in need! Gather friends, your congregation or youth group to package kits. Visit [nccumc.org/disaster/kits](http://nccumc.org/disaster/kits) for a list of instructions.

# Water-Washed, Spirit-Born

When God sent Moses to bring the people out of Egypt, he sent Aaron with Moses to help with the work. When Jesus began his public ministry, he gathered twelve disciples to work beside him and learn from him. Elijah and Elisha. Paul and Timothy.

We are reminded over and over again in scripture we are created for community, and that our work and ministry are enhanced and improved when we come together to serve.

In assessing the damage throughout the Conference, two facts quickly became evident:

- First, the scope of the damage was more extensive than any estimates or predictions - especially in areas that experienced damage from multiple storms.
- Second, it quickly became clear that we would need partners to accomplish all of the work of relief, recovery, and rebuilding.

In The United Methodist Church, one of our most important partnerships is with the [United Methodist Committee on Relief \(UMCOR\)](#). UMCOR provides financial help and expertise in disaster situations, both in the United States and around the world.

UMCOR grants totalling almost \$8 million have allowed us to grow our disaster ministries footprint to 13 centers and 75 persons on staff, all working to provide hope and healing. UMCOR also helps by providing training and assistance as our response to the storms continues to grow.

Ultimately, our most important partners are individuals—all of you. As an individual, it can be daunting to look at how much damage was left behind by these storms and think, “How can I fix this? How will I recover from this?”

But when individuals join together, offering their time, their talent, their energy, their willingness, and their love, the work of recovery becomes possible. The work of recovery gets done.

In a recent interview, Cathy Earl, Director of Disaster Response and U.S. Partner Relations for UMCOR, spoke about the power of partnerships and working together: “It can’t be done alone—no one person has all of those resources.”



We have been blessed to partner with a wide spectrum of organizations, across a variety of denominations and faith traditions.

The lists on the next page show just some of the many groups who have come alongside us in the crucial work of disaster recovery and relief.

One group in particular is Islamic Relief USA, who have worked extensively in the Tarboro area. Stepping across not only geographic boundaries, but faith lines as well, they have been hands and feet in our shared ministry.

The storms have come and gone, but the evidence of their impact will be with us for years to come. As these words are being written, we are in the midst of hurricane season once again. There have been storms, and more storms will come. But we also know that with God's help and with one another, there will also be hope, healing, and recovery.

If you want to get involved, visit our website, [nccumc.org/disaster](http://nccumc.org/disaster); call our Disaster Ministries Call Center at 888-440-9167; and follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/nccd-disaster](https://facebook.com/nccd-disaster) to see the work that is being done in eastern North Carolina.



**A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated,  
but two can stand back-to-back and conquer.  
Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.**

**- Ecclesiastes 4:12**

# Partnerships

## Denominations and Faith Traditions

Advent Christian  
African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church  
Amish  
Baptist  
Catholic  
Christian Reformed Church (Canada)  
Church of the Brethren  
Coptic Christian  
Disciples of Christ  
Episcopalian  
Hinduism  
Islam  
Judaism  
Lutheran  
Mennonite  
Moravian  
Presbyterian  
Reformed Church of America  
Reformed Protestant  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
United Church of Christ  
United Methodist Church



## Organizations and Schools

4 Mentor Advocate (Chapel Hill, NC)  
Americorps  
Apples Service Learning (Chapel Hill, NC)  
Beaufort County Emergency Services (Washington, NC)  
Be the Tool (St. Paul, MN)  
Boy Scout Troop 33 (Dekalb, IL)  
Boy Scout Troops 164 and 8 (Charlotte, NC)  
Cape Fear Grange (Fayetteville, NC)  
Carolina Center for Public Service (Chapel Hill, NC)  
Catholic Charities  
Center for Service Learning (Cullowhee, NC)  
Cherokee Disaster Services  
Claremont McKenna College (Claremont, CA)  
Cumberland County Bar Association (Fayetteville, NC)  
Dauphin County Technical School (Harrisburg, PA)  
Edgecombe Community College (Tarboro, NC)  
Edgecombe Early College (Tarboro, NC)  
Elon University (Elon, NC)  
Embrace Relief (Washington, DC)  
Epping Community College (Danville, NH)  
Ferris Community College (Big Rapids, MI)  
Friar Society, West Chester University (West Chester, PA)  
Fuccella Work Teams (Cary, NC)  
Gardiner's Construction (Sanford, NC)  
Gloucester County Community Church (Sewell, NJ)  
Graingers (Fayetteville, NC)  
Grand Valley State University (Grand Rapids, MI)  
Green Earth Cleaning Solutions (Rock Hill, SC)  
Hope Force International (Brentwood, TN)  
Howard University (Washington, DC)  
Islamic Relief USA  
Lehman Group (Farmville, NC)  
Lend A Hand  
Mercy Career and Technical HS (Philadelphia, PA)  
NC Department of Health & Human Services (Raleigh, NC)  
NC Department of Public Safety (Raleigh, NC)  
NC Department of Motor Vehicles (Raleigh, NC)



North Carolina State University (Raleigh, NC)  
Penn State Athletics (State College, PA)  
Richard Petty Motorsports  
Shenandoah University (Winchester, VA)  
Team Rubicon USA (Los Angeles, CA)  
Towson University (Towson, MD)  
Triangle Community College (Apex, NC)  
Tri-State Hope Builders (Baltimore, MD / Washington, DC)  
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, NC)  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (Champaign, IL)  
United States Marine Corps  
United States Naval Academy  
Veterans for American Ideals (Raleigh, NC)  
Vision Builders  
Visions Outreach (Statesville, NC)  
World Renew Disaster Response Services

## Partners

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)  
The Duke Endowment  
American Red Cross  
North Carolina Emergency Management  
United Way  
Lowe's Companies, Inc.  
Hurricane Florence Relief and Recovery Fund of Cumberland  
Community Foundation  
North Carolina Housing Finance Agency

...and many more!

# Healthy Congregations

When a natural disaster occurs, we often think of recovery and rebuilding efforts in terms of how to help people, families, and homes, or working to help cities and towns rebuild and take care of their citizens.

But what happens when the place where we worship—where we gather to hear God’s word, where we come for fellowship and discipleship, where we meet at God’s table and go out to serve—is disrupted or even displaced?

Across our North Carolina Conference, 93 churches and 32 parsonages sustained damage, ranging from small leaks and fallen tree limbs to damaged steeples and flooded sanctuaries. Pews, hymnals, carpet, office equipment, HVAC units, stained glass windows—all victims of Florence’s devastation.

For some churches impacted by the storm, the damage was such that worship could continue as normal after the storm.



But for some churches, the first few weeks after the storm meant worshipping in a different part of the building, or being unable to use any part of the building at all. The sanctuary might have been unusable due to water damage or mold, or parts of the building may have been unsafe due to structural concerns.

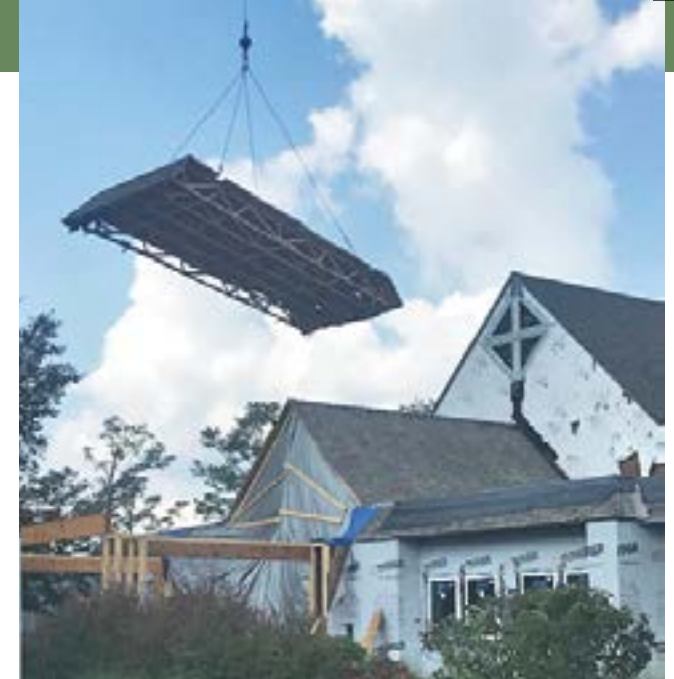
Hampstead UMC, in Pender County, was one of the churches hit hardest by Florence. The roof was torn off, the ceiling was caved in, and the interior of the church flooded. The church was able to utilize their youth building for Sunday worship services and other activities, but some events that had been planned had to be canceled due to the damage.

Madeline Gibson, a youth who attends Hampstead, said: “We’ve met in so many different spaces, but our community remains vibrant, which has been such a blessing.”

What does it look like to extend that blessing, even in the midst of recovery and rebuilding?

Earlier this year, while working on Hampstead’s building, church members noticed that another nearby church, St. John Church of Christ (Disciples of Christ) had a tarp covering the roof.

Hampstead’s pastor, Rev. Skip Williams, reached out to church leadership at St. John to see if Hampstead could help in any way. Around the same time, another United Methodist church,



Blair Road UMC in Charlotte, had adopted Hampstead UMC and was planning a benefit picnic to help raise money for rebuilding efforts.

After conversation with Blair Road UMC, it was agreed that the two churches would combine their efforts and use the event to help St. John with repairing their church. Madeline said that the event was “a wonderful way for everybody in the community to get together and praise God.”

In the aftermath of wind and water, this is a powerful reminder that churches are more than just buildings with sanctuaries and classrooms, parking lots and pews.

Our churches are people—people who reach out in tangible ways to BE the church, and people who use what they have been blessed with to bless others.

# Congregations for Children

The North Carolina Conference values partnerships with children throughout North Carolina. Bishop Ward challenged churches in the conference to partner with local schools to provide for students' needs. The [Congregations for Children](#) (C4C) outreach program provides students with school supplies, meal kits, tutoring, and other resources.

[Wesley Memorial UMC](#) in Wilmington, NC is one of the flagship churches for the C4C program. Since 2013, Wesley Memorial has partnered with Winter Park Elementary School to provide tutors, backpacks, food, and library books. The church provides more than just supplies for the students of Winter Park. The church has created a group called the "Watch D.O.G.S." (Dads Of Great Students) to provide strong male role models for students. The congregation also helped donate a dryer to a family in need that struggled with bed bugs.

Senior Pastor Beth Hood, and her congregation has followed the calling to "love God with their hearts and minds" by establishing relationships

with the students of Winter Park throughout their six-year partnership. Wesley Memorial's relationships with the students grew stronger after Hurricane Florence in 2018. The entire community in Wilmington was affected by Florence's strong winds and rain.

Winter Park Elementary was out of school for weeks and 100% of the students receive free breakfast and lunch. Wesley Memorial knew the students were in need of food, supplies, and familiar faces. The church established a distribution center with food, MERCI cleaning kits, and diapers from a local diaper bank. Teachers volunteered to work at the center as a way to give back to the church, who supported both students and teachers at Winter Park.

Wesley Memorial has developed an ongoing partnership with Nourish NC to distribute food donations. During the aftermath of Florence, large quantities of food were difficult to obtain. Nourish NC's warehouse in Wilmington provided the resources needed for the families at Winter Park. The distribution continued to operate for

**"Whoever welcomes  
one of these little children  
in my name welcomes me;  
and whoever welcomes me  
does not welcome me  
but the one who sent me."**

**- Mark 9:37**

three weeks following Florence. The parents and community members were appreciative of Wesley Memorial's generosity.

Even after the distribution center closed, Wesley Memorial continued relief efforts at the school, providing children and teachers with supplies that were lost by the hurricane. Hood values the relationships that have been built with the students at Winter Park. The teachers and volunteers at Winter Park allowed the students to regain a sense of normalcy during a time of crisis.

Wesley Memorial continues to support the students and staff at Winter Park Elementary. Hood hopes the students "see the church as people who love them and have compassion for them." Providing support for the children at Winter Park is a way to honor Christ. Wesley Memorial provided hope for children and families in Winter Park in a time when all hope was lost.

Outreach programs like Congregations for Children allow congregations to be Christ's hands and feet. Hurricane relief in The United Methodist Church occurs in many ways through a variety of programs and every program has the ability to serve "as a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of disaster."



# Effective Leaders

Our Site Managers truly embody our mission. Each one serves as a caring Christian presence. They foster partnerships with volunteers and community members, and rebuild lives. They work endlessly to make sure every survivor's and volunteer's needs are met.

We are so thankful for all of our Site Managers and their efforts to rebuild communities. Without their leadership, Disaster Ministries would not have been able to help return 619 people home.

## David Fowler Fayetteville Site Manager

"The volunteers are the hands and feet of Jesus. We provide the tools and accommodations they need to complete the job."



David Fowler joined the Disaster Ministries team in January 2019. As the Fayetteville Site Manager, David is responsible for the activities in the center and coordinating with volunteer teams to make sure their needs are met.

During Hurricane Florence, the Fayetteville community experienced wind and flood damage. David and his Fayetteville team work to "restore the people of Fayetteville to their life before the storm." David says that it is a great joy to help people return home and it would not be possible without the help of donors and volunteers.

## Ann Wade Lumberton Site Manager

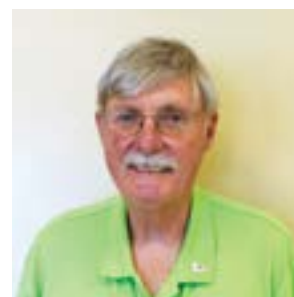
"I have been truly blessed by the people I have met. Be it the survivors or the volunteers; they went from strangers to family. I can't think of anything else that I could be doing that would bring me the joy and happiness that I get from being a servant of the Lord. Even when times are stressful, I know that God has blessed me, and I am here for a reason."



Ann Wade has been the Lumberton Site Manager for two and a half years. Ann and her husband, Jeff, received a calling to help others in need but did not know where or in what capacity. During Hurricane Florence, Ann checked on the homes that the Lumberton Center was currently working on from Hurricane Matthew, but there was little she could do "besides watching the waters rise." Her goal is to help as many survivors as she can, "giving survivors the same quality of work" and friendship. Ann makes sure the people she helps are not forgotten once the job is completed. Ann also establishes the same relationship with her volunteers because they have become a part of her family.

## Greg Ehrler Newport Site Manager

"Giving families the ability to move back home again and seeing a smile return to their face



is the reward of working in disaster ministries. I feel like we are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

The Newport Disaster Recovery Center opened in February 2019. Greg Ehrler was a member of Ann Street United Methodist Church's Early Response Team for over 15 years before he became the Newport Site Manager. During Hurricane Florence, eight trees fell on Greg's property, with one damaging the roof of his home. Greg's community responded to his need, and Greg helped respond to the needs of others. His goal as the Newport Site Manager is to rebuild as many homes as possible. Greg is thankful for his relationship with volunteers from across the country because "they represent hope to many people who are still struggling."

## Stephanie Hunt Swansboro Site Manager

"Seven years ago, I sold all my worldly possessions to travel, helping others in need."



Stephanie joined the Disaster Ministries team as both the site manager and construction manager in the Swansboro office in January 2019. Stephanie has worked in disaster response for over seven years in two countries and three states. After riding out Hurricane Florence in Fayetteville, Stephanie helped establish a shelter for those who had no place to go. Stephanie says she was led by God to work at Disaster Ministries. Her goal is to help families in the Swansboro area return home.

## Jason DuVall

Tarboro Site Manager

"You ask me what my goal is: It is to fully equip the saints for the ministry of Christ in the chaos of a disaster. To make sure that when a volunteer steps out into the field that they are ready for what lies ahead of them...It is because of the many members of the body, on one accord, that makes this happen in Christ."



Jason DuVall is an Associate Pastor at Lake Gaston Charge and has served as the Site Manager in Tarboro for three years.

Jason "was looking for a greater purpose" when Hurricane Matthew hit in 2016. Edgecombe County was affected by the severe flooding that occurred in the area. Jason and his team took over the "old health department" in Edgecombe County to open a disaster center to help survivors in the area.

He is "blessed to be supported by the local communities" and is grateful for the "thousands of volunteers of many faith-based organizations [who have] answered the call" to help others in need.

Through his work at Disaster Ministries, Jason has seen hope be restored "in the eyes of survivors" through those who have "sacrificed their time and generosity to support all of the families, who have had their lives turned upside down."

## Donna Brander

Washington Site Manager

"Advocating for and helping people get their lives back to a new normal is rewarding in itself. I cannot say I know how they are feeling having lost all, but I do empathize and can listen to them, hold their hands and pass out tissues. I do understand trauma and pain, and with God's help, I can continue to be a part of the hands and feet of God's workers in the Disaster Response Ministry of the NC Conference."



Donna Brander joined the Disaster Ministries team in 2011 to help survivors of Hurricane Irene. Previously, she was the Director of Shepherd's Staff Food Bank, a case manager at Belhaven Senior Center, and worked with FEMA following Hurricane Floyd in 1999. Donna worked to help 650 people recover from Irene from Aurora, New Bern, Washington, Belhaven, and Swan Quarter, as well as survivors from the 2014 tornadoes. Donna is so thankful for all of the volunteers who have come to help rebuild eastern NC. Local churches, businesses, and organizations have "enriched us by sharing their unending faith and love for those in need." Donna says it is very special to see volunteers and survivors laughing, crying, and worshipping together.

## Vickie Sasser

Whiteville Site Manager

"With so many of our family and friends devastated by this disaster, I had to do something. I had to do more than just clean out the debris left by this flood."



Vickie Sasser became the Whiteville Site Manager earlier this year. Following Hurricane Florence, Vickie and her husband, Doug, helped muck out homes, remove debris, and tarp roofs. Vickie says it has been unbearable for families impacted by both Hurricane Florence and Matthew. Her goal is to help disaster survivors find a "new normal." Vickie brings hope to disaster survivors by reminding them they are not alone. Her leadership, along with volunteers and donors, will work towards repairing survivors' homes through long-term recovery.

## Ed Sundy

Wilmington Site Manager

"The Wilmington Site services Brunswick, New Hanover, and Pender Counties. Our objective is to repair and rebuild as quickly and safely as we can to get families back into livable conditions. We are the hands and feet of Jesus across Southeastern North Carolina as we minister both physically and spiritually."



Ed joined Disaster Ministries in April 2019 as the Wilmington Site Manager. Before joining the Disaster Ministries, Ed was the ERT coordinator for Wesley Memorial UMC in Wilmington. Following Hurricane Florence, Ed gathered ERTs in Wilmington to cut down trees, muck out homes, tarp roofs, and remove debris.

Now Ed works with ERTs, volunteers, case managers, and construction managers to repair survivors' homes. He is so thankful for all the volunteers who have come to Southeastern North Carolina to help meet our goal faster. Ed says the "volunteers are the ones who make the difference in survivors' lives."

# Thank You

Almost three years ago, North Carolina was impacted by Hurricane Matthew. Matthew caused severe flooding throughout Eastern North Carolina in areas that had not previously been impacted.

The devastation was felt across the state and communities began to come together in response to the natural disaster.

The North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church enabled Early Response Teams to muck out homes, tarp roofs, and spray for mold. Disaster Ministries established four response centers to help rebuild homes impacted by Matthew.

Disaster Ministries was moving into long-term recovery when Hurricane Florence hit in 2018. Over 13,000 people were identified as in need of assistance to repair damages caused by Florence. Disaster Ministries was then expanded from four to eight response centers with five satellite locations.



And just a year later, Hurricane Dorian made landfall in NC. At least 250 homes are known to need assistance.

Since Hurricane Matthew, over 600

homes have been completed due to the leadership of our site managers, donors, volunteers, and partners.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have selflessly donated their time to help others in need. Over 200 North Carolina churches have responded, along with the assistance of teams from across the country.

To date, Disaster Ministries has had 21,825 volunteers who have worked 723,128 hours, equating to \$18,389,145 worth of labor. We are so grateful for each and every person who has helped restore hope to disaster survivors.

We are so thankful for the partnerships we have developed with state organizations and other relief groups, particularly the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and The Duke Endowment. We have received \$7.8 million in grants which will allow Disaster Ministries to continue operations through December 2020.

Disaster Ministries serves as a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of disaster, fostering partnerships between United Methodists and others to help rebuild homes, communities, and lives.

We work to restore hope to families who thought they were forgotten. Our hope is to continue rebuilding the homes and lives of disaster survivors, which would not be possible without



your gift of service.

We thank you for your willingness to join our team to help others in need. There are 157 homes in progress and over 722 homes waiting for repairs. We hope that you will continue to support us and join our team in being the hands and feet of Christ.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alton Miller III".

Alton Miller III  
Director of Disaster Ministries



## **Disaster Ministries**

North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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