

**Conference Disaster Response Coordinator
Report to Conference Council
October 2024**

My current activities include continuing to work with two Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRG) located in the south and west sides of the city of Chicago. This recovery effort is in response to flooding that occurred due to storms from June 29 to July 2, 2023 that produced rainfall of 7 to 9 inches of rain that simply overwhelmed an aging sewer infrastructure.

My role has been to make available a seed grant of \$7500 to each LTRG. In that process, I have been involved in helping the groups learn what an LTRG is, and to identify people to serve in the several positions required. I am pleased to report that both the Westside Long Term Recovery Group, and the Southside Resilience & Recovery Coalition have received their grants in the full amount. It is important for me to note that my involvement in this event response has been as a part of our Conference membership in the Northeast Illinois Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD).

Until this September and Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the year had been relatively quiet. The damage from these two (2) massive storms has exceeded all predictions as both storms affected a larger and far different geography than any previous storms. Experienced estimates rank Helene as at least as damaging as Katrina, perhaps worse.

I have already had inquiries from several Conference congregations asking how they can best respond. My advice is limited: send money. Our National Global Ministries office has set up a 'donate button' on the Disaster Ministry page of our National UCC website. Every penny of funds donated will go to providing needed supplies. Currently, all donated funds are being distributed through our several Conferences located in the southeastern states affected. These Conferences have "boots on the ground" who are connecting with the authentic, reliable organizations who are actively providing volunteers and supplies where they're needed.

The impact of these hurricanes has highlighted the need for all forms of disaster response kits, therefore, I am preparing to announce at our Annual Celebration, a new Kit Challenge. The greatest need is for Cleanup Buckets, but our challenge will support making all of the different types. More information will come in Faithful Fridays.

In addition to a kit campaign, I have registered our Illinois Conference as a member of the Crisis Cleanup organization. Any congregation or group wanting to volunteer their services in any disaster recovery process should contact Crisis Cleanup directly. Crisis Cleanup is a very recent development whose purpose is to provide a connection for volunteers to both on-site organizations as well as individual cases where volunteer help is needed. Crisis Cleanup is itself seeking volunteers to serve as phone bank operators and other response functions. All Crisis Cleanup services are provided free of charge. I will have more Crisis Cleanup contact information available very shortly.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Roger Dart
Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

