



June 22, 2015

One of my personal highlights at our Annual Conference session was coming down to the floor Wednesday afternoon to **bleed our disaster response leaders.**



Many of these leaders were headed to Detroit to assist in work related to the devastating flood that city experienced a year ago. Praying with and for them was a privilege. As these committed leaders responded in Detroit last week, a disaster in our own conference began to unfold in Marion, Logan, Pickaway and many other counties.

In LaRue, a small community in Marion county, the town is again experiencing the destruction of rivers expanding beyond their banks. A community of senior adults living close to the poverty line is among the most vulnerable. Because our **West Ohio UMCOR trained case manager, Deb Berry, was prepared**, volunteers were organized to help people move belongings where they might be safe from the ravages of flooding water. And once again, the **LaRue United Methodist Church** opened its doors to the residents so they could experience a safe and hospitable place until the Red Cross Shelter could be opened.

Across Ohio this week and last week, many other communities are experiencing roads closed, town streets underwater and damaged homes; some officials are declaring a state of emergency in their own counties. Once the rain stops and water starts to recede, our West Ohio Disaster Response Teams will be needed to help with the repairs.



Having the resources and disaster plan in place, along with partnerships with local United Methodist churches, is critical to the work of our Disaster Response ministry. Then after the disaster and when invited, we can effectively move in to provide financial support where needed and help clean and rebuild so people like those in LaRue can return to safe and liveable homes.

It will take prayer, time and money for the people of LaRue to recover from their second flood in 18 months. Other communities across Ohio will likely end up in similar circumstances, however, it is unlikely that a declaration will be made by the state due to the small number of people affected in each community. As a result, money needed to help communities recover will need to be raised from caring

individuals.

We continue to experience the spirit of God's generosity throughout our conference. I invite you to extend that generosity once again so that our committed disaster volunteers may assist our neighbors in their upcoming recovery. **Every dollar you contribute will stay within West Ohio** assisting families recovering from disasters.

You can support this effort in several ways.

1. Pray for our disaster response leaders and for the people currently experiencing hardship due to flooding.
2. Donate online by going to westohioumc.org/donate and selecting *Disaster Response* then *West Ohio Disaster*. Again, every dollar you give stays in West Ohio.
3. Learn how to help your church prepare for disasters and the other ways you can participate in disaster response ministry by contacting [Jeff Walker](#), our Conference Disaster Response Coordinator.

I want to thank you for the many ways in which you practice the spiritual discipline of generosity. I am grateful to serve in a conference committed to extending Jesus' love to our neighbors during vulnerable times. I remain,

Yours in Christ,



Gregory V. Palmer