

Disaster Response Task Force Update (October 23)

The devastating storms and flooding from Hurricane Helene have impacted a wide area of Western North Carolina as well as other areas. Many people are still in need but much of the recovery work has brought great relief. At present, we can share this good news about the Western North Carolina region:

- Less than 10,000 households are still without power, down from 1.1 million
 - City water is now flowing in the Asheville area, albeit it's not safe to drink. Residents can now flush toilets, wash clothes and take showers. A boiled water advisory is still in effect and should be resolved in a week's time.
- 85% of the roads are open and passable
- While there is significant damage to bridges, many of the local communities have constructed temporary bridges out of trees and plywood which work for a 4-wheeler
- Leaf season is open for some parts of the region which will help with tourism dollars

The Community Mission Committee's **Disaster Response Task Force** continues to recommend that you give to one of several organizations. [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#), [Black Mountain Presbyterian Church](#), [The Presbytery of Western North Carolina](#) or the [American Red Cross](#). Links to these organizations are also at www.dcp.org. If you are more comfortable sending your donation through DCPC then simply indicate "Disaster Relief" in your contribution to the church and we will send to organizations most in need.

We are excited about the work that is happening at **Camp Grier** in Old Fort and encourage you to check out opportunities to be involved with the recovery work in that region. You can visit www.campgrier.org for more information.

We have also learned of good work that is happening at First Presbyterian Church of Marion in a partnership with Centro Unido. They are assisting many lower-income families in the Hispanic community. To learn more about them you can find their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fpcmarionnc/>

MATERIAL DONATIONS

Many people have donated items like water, diapers, and other goods. We are **not** recommending a focus on this kind of giving currently because many things are going unused as water and electricity is being restored in many places. There may be opportunities for cold-weather items as we approach winter and we will keep you informed about those as we learn more.

Hands-On Service Opportunities

We are working with the Presbytery of Western NC to identify a specific community where we can focus our attention to assist with recovery. Once that is done we will be planning day and multi-day trips to help with clean-up, recovery work, and rebuilding. If you are interested in helping to plan or work on one of these teams, please let Robert know.

Some are finding opportunities through The Red Cross, Samaritan's Purse, and other relief groups, for volunteer opportunities. We encourage you to get involved as your schedule and skills allow. Please do not go on your own to serve without finding a group to serve with and making sure they know to expect you. This will cut down on wasted time and energy and will help the relief groups be able to be as effective and efficient.

We have learned that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is touring the area this next week and will begin identifying the communities where they will set up long term host sites. We look forward to connecting and working with them. Until then, please find a place to serve as you are able and as your skills/resources allow.

You can find opportunities for service at:

www.campgrier.com (Volunteers needed in Old Fort, NC Tuesday-Saturday)

www.bannerelk.com (Volunteers needed daily in Banner Elk and Avery County)

<https://www.facebook.com/LatinoAmericanopage> (Centro Unido in Marion, NC)

<https://www.belovedasheville.com/> (A variety of needs and volunteer opportunities)

DCPC's CURRENT FINANCIAL RESPONSE

The Community Mission Committee has already made three financial gifts from funds that we have on hand.

\$2000 was given to Camp Grier to help them purchase a generator to run a walk-in refrigerator and freezer. Our beloved Camp Grier is positioning itself to be a home base for the National Guard, utility crews, and recovery groups. They do not know when electricity will be restored to their area. They are ready to house and feed relief crews!

\$1000 was given to Ruple Memorial Presbyterian Church in Blowing Rock to assist with their relief efforts in the Boone/Blowing Rock area. This is the church where former DCPC Associate Pastor Kathy Beach currently serves as Pastor.

\$1000 was given to Black Mountain Presbyterian Church to assist in their efforts to feed community members who have been displaced or who have lost power and water and cannot cook at home.

Approximately \$1000 has been shared with Black Mountain Children's Home for the purchase of coats, hats, and gloves for children at the home.

Many other groups have gathered collections to share with those in need and we encourage that kind of collaboration and generosity.

The Task Force continues to meet weekly to assess the situation, recommend changes in our approach, and plan future in-person visits for clean-up and rebuilding efforts. If you have thoughts or recommendations for us to consider please reach out to Robert Alexander at ralexander@dcpc.org .