

United Church Launches Appeal for Caribbean Hurricane Relief

In response to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti, Cuba, and other Caribbean countries provoked by a series of hurricanes, The United Church of Canada is appealing for donations to its Emergency Response Fund. *The church has already committed \$50,000 to relief efforts by partners in the region.*

Fay, Gustav, Hanna, and most recently Ike have left as many as one million Haitians homeless and more than 500 dead. Serious flooding was reported in many areas, and the country's agricultural capacity is again weakened.

In Cuba, seven people were killed. But houses and other buildings, together with the agricultural sector, were seriously damaged. Cuban news agencies report that the path of destruction stretches for more than a thousand kilometres across the island. At least 30,000 families have lost their homes; another 320,000 homes have suffered serious damage. Agriculture has been severely affected.

In addition, serious damage was reported in Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Cayman Islands, and the Gulf Coast of the United States.

The United Church of Canada has partners in all of the affected territories, and has pledged to work with them and ecumenical partners through Action by Churches Together (ACT) in relief and reconstruction efforts.

Several partners are affected and are responding to the humanitarian crises provoked by the hurricanes:

- Caribbean and North American Council on Mission
- Caribbean Conference of Churches
- Cuban Council of Churches
- Karl Lévéque Cultural Institute, Haiti
- Methodist Church of the Caribbean and the Americas (including the Haiti District)
- Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba
- United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

How United Church Members Can Help

From the General Council Office, our thoughts and prayers go out to our sisters and brothers who have been affected during the 2008 hurricane season. United Church members across Canada are urged also to pray for the people who live in affected communities.

Please consider making a donation through the Emergency Response Fund to "Caribbean Hurricane Relief."

As always with United Church emergency appeals, 100 percent of all donations received will be committed to support relief and reconstruction work for people in need. There is no administration fee deducted. This is made possible thanks to the generous ongoing support of United Church members to the church's Mission and Service (M&S) Fund. Contributions to M&S allow the United Church to absorb the staffing and operating costs of processing donations for emergency appeals.

In the case of designated gifts for emergency appeals such as the Caribbean Hurricane Relief, the church allocates 15 percent of your donation to replenish the Emergency Response Fund. These monies are used exclusively to enable the United Church to immediately respond to current and future emergency needs of people in crisis around the world.

Secure online donations can be made at www.united-church.ca/getinvolved/donate. Cheques should be made payable to *The United Church of Canada*, marked "Emergency Response: Caribbean Hurricane Relief," and sent to:

3250 Bloor St. East, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

Please continue to support the Mission and Service Fund. The ongoing work of partners in the region is supported by M&S and makes possible the United Church's long history of connection with the people of Haiti and Cuba.

For further information, please see:

www.united-church.ca/communications/news/response/080916

Designated gifts cannot be counted as M&S Fund credits. However, they are eligible for tax receipts. Congregational treasurers may receive and receipt individual cheques and then forward one congregational cheque to the United Church.

