

TWK Disaster Response
Rev. Donna Parramore, Chairperson—Disaster Response Leadership Committee and
Rev. Robert Craig, Disaster Response Coordinator

The mission of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Committee for Disaster Response is to prepare local churches, districts, and the TWKUMC to serve alongside local communities in times of disaster. Training is a vital part of this preparation, given the scope of natural disasters that communities within our conference have experienced the past several years. Through donations and volunteer efforts from within our own conference, from neighboring conferences, and in partnership with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), we can say confidently that our conference and our churches have been the arms and feet of Christ in places of great need.

Early response on the ground and remaining until the recovery is fully achieved community-wide has defined our United Methodist response in the last several years. TWK disaster ministry has been deeply involved in the early response and long-term recovery efforts in more than a dozen communities throughout our geographic area, including flooding in Waverly and Nashville, as well as tornadoes in Dresden, Clarksville, Cookeville, Mt. Juliet, Nashville, Mayfield, and Hickman. UMCOR grants and conference donations have allowed the TWKUMC to deploy disaster case managers, construction leadership, and volunteers in these areas to help hurting people attain the resources needed to achieve a (w)holistic recovery. The functions provided by TWKUMC Disaster Recovery are simply parts of a larger collaborative network of long-term recovery partners who each provide a piece of their community's recovery, including functions like spiritual/emotional care, materials/supplies distribution, volunteer management, and financial donation distribution.

We give thanks, therefore, for these individuals who are representing the United Methodist Church's commitment to care for those in places of disaster and ask for your continued prayers for their work: Brendan Gierer, Steve Venick, Elizabeth Soard, Heather Marriott, Rose Sherron, Bethany Van Neste, Louise Vande Wiele, Christie Elam, Tracy King, Mary Kate White, Heyde Hackel Becca Rogers, Quint Minnis, David Wagner, Ethan Freese, Bo Walker, Pam Miller, Brenna Lucero, Tawanna Wright, Esther Hogueley, and Rachel Zello.

We also give thanks for the clergy and laity who have taken Early Response Team (ERT) training at Murfreesboro FUMC and Lebanon FUMC. ERT training prepares volunteers to respond in the immediate aftermath of a disaster responsibly and compassionately. These teams are deployed only at the invitation of the conference wherein the disaster has taken place, and our conference this year has received teams from many conferences to help our local communities. Such is the power of the connection at work among us!

The conference's ability to respond to our neighbors impacted by disaster is made possible by donations and grants. The need for financial and volunteer donations remains a priority for the conference to be able to continue to walk with our neighbors. The support of our connection makes the ministry of restoring hope possible.

Be there. Be hope.