

Giving in the Face of the Storms

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The Florida United Methodist Foundation
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This is the time of year when many churches and charitable organizations start to talk and write about year-end giving. This year in Florida, where we have been battered by an unprecedented hurricane season, that appeal takes on added significance. No one needs to be reminded of the physical, emotional and spiritual toll absorbed by Floridians as a result of Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne. It has been an awful season.

At least half of Florida Conference churches cancelled one or more worship services because of the storms. Those that stayed open saw sharply reduced attendance on storm Sundays. Some churches damaged by the hurricanes are still forced to worship in makeshift, temporary quarters while their worship spaces are being repaired. It has been an awful season.

As a result of the hurricanes, many churches have experienced a marked decline in giving by their members and friends. That is understandable. It has been an awful season.

But God has a way of turning the awful into the wonderful. United Methodists in our conference and beyond our conference have responded to the devastation wreaked by the storms by giving to the Florida Conference Storm Recovery Fund, which as of this writing is nearing one million dollars in total giving. That is a remarkable response and a tribute to our connectional system. In that way it has been a wonderful season.

As we approach the end of the year, the Foundation encourages you to prayerfully consider what God is calling you to give, to support the mission and ministry of our local churches and to sustain the connection that is our heritage and our future.

For those of you who have made a pledge, please keep it current and consider accelerating your gifts.

For those of you who own appreciated securities, please consider a gift of stock to your church. There are potential tax advantages for you when you give appreciated securities.

For those of you who want to honor a loved one, please consider an honor or memorial gift.

For those of you who are planning your estate, please consider a bequest or a charitable gift annuity or a charitable trust, naming your church as beneficiary. There are potential tax and income benefits for you and your family when you make a planned gift.

For all of us, a gift is an expression of our faith, a response to God's grace expressed in Jesus Christ who calmed the storm, a response to our God who has given us everything.

The possibilities are endless. The choice is yours.

As the stewardship voice of the Florida Conference, the Foundation is ready to help you, your family and your church with anything related to stewardship. Please call, click or write us at 1-800-282-8011, extension 106; www.fumf.org; or PO Box 3767, Lakeland, FL 33802.