

## How You Can Help

### *Loving Kindness*

- Pray for our Gulf Coast partners, remembering not only the people they serve, but also the leaders of those ministries.
- Invite a Gulf Coast Ambassador to your church for worship, second hour presentation, or Mission Board or Church Council meeting.
- Commit mission dollars to relief and recovery efforts, while maintaining and strengthening support of Our Church's Wider Mission, which provides the infrastructure for this work.
- Organize a work team to the Gulf Coast.
- Share your church's story with others. Contact Jim Morgan at the Conference Office.
- Consider becoming an Gulf Coast ambassador.

### *Doing Justice*

- Learn about the economic, political, and social realities of the Gulf Coast region and recovery efforts.
- Ask questions about governmental policies and programs and contact legislators working on issues related to disaster response.

### *Walking Humbly*

- Our work in disaster response and recovery is a ministry of partnership. We seek to listen to the struggles, joys, and hopes of our ministry partners, and discern together ways to offer our hands and hearts in the rebuilding of lives and hope.
- We do not walk alone, trusting in God's grace to sustain and encourage us, and to help us imagine new and creative ways of ministry together.

As we seek to reconstruct lives of dignity and hope, your prayers, financial support and labor are vital to these recovery efforts. Your service will assist in the physical acts of helping people rebuild their homes; your presence shows the commitment to walk together as they rebuild their lives.

## Contacts for Partnership

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**Gulf Coast Ambassadors**  
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**Gulf Coast Partners**  
Back Bay Mission  
Volunteer Coordinator  
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Florida Conference  
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New Orleans  
Reverend Alan Coe  
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## Connecticut Conference Disaster Response Ministry Team

*Hand to Hand...  
Heart to Heart*



**Opportunities  
for Partnership In  
Response and Recovery  
Along the Gulf Coast**

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



*...And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?*

- Micah 6:8

Following the devastating hurricanes of 2005, the churches of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ pledged their support to the recovery efforts along the Gulf Coast.

At the Annual Meeting in October 2005, we specifically committed to long-term relief, recovery and reform in partnership with Central Congregational Church UCC in New Orleans, Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi and the Florida Conference. Our hearts are joined in rebuilding efforts that continue today, tomorrow, and for the foreseeable future. Here, briefly, are their stories:

### **Central Congregational Church**

Central Congregational Church UCC in New Orleans is one of our historic American Missionary Association churches, founded in 1867, and long a voice for justice, equality and peace in the city. Through years of struggle with racism, hatred and injustice, the church was a beacon of hope.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the challenge facing the people of New Orleans is unprecedented. Homes and businesses, schools and churches, lives and neighborhoods must be rebuilt. The faith community, deeply engrained in the fabric of New Orleans, is on the front lines of this response. Currently worshipping with St. Matthews Church in New Orleans, Central Congregational Church remains a vital Christian witness to a struggling community.

### **Back Bay Mission**

Back Bay Mission, a community ministry of the United Church of Christ since 1922, is dedicated to serving the poor and disadvantaged, the most vulnerable in the community. Today, in the midst of its own rebuilding challenges, Back Bay Mission's shining presence has never been needed more.

As a key community leader, Back Bay Mission conducts vital advocacy and community development work. The Mission is currently focusing its efforts for just and equitable disaster recovery in five program areas, including emergency assistance and case management for low-income residents, housing rehabilitation, community empowerment, the "Home At Last" program, offering permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons, and a new-construction, affordable housing initiative.

Back Bay Mission has long-standing relationships with many churches in the Conference. Our sustained walk and work of partnership and mission interpretation requires energy, passion, and prayer, offering hope to struggling communities.

### **The Florida Conference**

It is easy to forget that before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Florida was hit not once, not twice, but four times in the summer and early autumn of 2004. But we will not forget our sisters and brothers in the Florida Conference.

The Conference has dedicated itself to encouraging and promoting congregations and individuals to send work teams to assist the Florida Conference with disaster recovery efforts.

Our compassionate Christian response is required for the individuals and families whose lives have been disrupted since 2004 as they wait for their home to be made livable once again. The Florida Conference is situated close to Biloxi, New Orleans and other devastated communities. The sooner we can remedy problems in Florida, the sooner they can assist in other work along the Gulf Coast. The Florida Conference is well prepared to receive, house, feed and direct volunteer groups.

### **The Gulf Coast Ambassadors Program**

The Conference has recently launched the Gulf Coast Ambassadors Program, featuring presenters equipped to help local churches understand the ongoing situations among our partners in the region and the critical need for our sustained response. In the aftermath of this terrible devastation, we know that mutual relationships and support are a source of blessing and hope. A seven-minute, Conference-produced DVD program, "Hand to Hand...Heart to Heart" is part of the Ambassador's presentation and can be left with your church for future use. If you would like to schedule an Ambassador to visit your church, please contact Reverend Donna Manocchio or Jim Morgan.

### **Disaster Preparedness in Connecticut**

Think it can't happen here? The hurricanes Connecticut experienced in 1938 and 1955 prove otherwise. And of course, disasters are not limited to hurricanes or other natural events. There is one truth: Disasters will happen! When they do, the church is called to respond. How prepared is your family, your congregation, your community for the unexpected?

The Connecticut Conference is committed to working with our churches to help make sure that resources are identified and plans are in place for a coordinated, effective response. Our Disaster Response Ministry Team is available to come and consult with your church to assist with this work. Once a disaster happens, it is too late to prepare. Please consider using this very capable resource before a disaster occurs.

See the resources listed in this brochure to contact a Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and begin this important work today!