

Care for the Journey: Hurricane Harvey Response

Rev. Monica Wedlock Kilpatrick

Director of NBA Connect Ministries

November 2017



Experience teaches that clergy and their families give and stretch themselves in significant ways following a natural disaster, and finding space to focus on their own spiritual, mental and sometimes even financial wellbeing is essential. In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, Week of Compassion, National Benevolent Association, and Pension Fund are partnering to offer spiritual wellness care with affected clergy. Knowing that togetherness is key during times of distress and loss, these three ministries are collaborating to facilitate retreats and resources, offering safe space for clergy to process their experiences and needs for the recovery ahead.

On October 27, Week of Compassion and NBA offered a one-day retreat with affected clergy in Houston. Providing a place for intentional connection with one another, this retreat gave clergy space to talk through early reactions to their experiences with Harvey; process the emotional, psychological, and spiritual toll the storm has taken; and share resources to journey the road to recovery ahead.

“It is important for me to share just how awesome the event was and how outstanding these folks are,” said Rev. Bruce Frogge, Senior Minister of Cypress Creek Christian Church.

“Thanks for thinking of us and providing us this gift!”

On January 3-5, 2018, Week of Compassion, NBA, and Pension Fund are sponsoring a two-day retreat at Franciscan Renewal Center - The Casa in Scottsdale, Arizona, for Houston-area Disciples clergy and their families affected by Hurricane Harvey. As a follow-up to the one-day program, this retreat will offer important information explaining the long-term effects of natural disasters; spiritual and practical insights for healthy recovery; and ample time, space, and grace for clergy to focus on their own well-being.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Week of Compassion and the Disciples Regions involved held a retreat for affected clergy, who reported that the time “away” was very important for their ongoing well-being. Amid the response and the business, it can be hard to imagine pulling away for some self, family, and colleague care, yet we think that doing so can make all the difference for the long run.

We hope these pastors and families can come relax and reflect, breathe and process, all they have been walking through in these days. Registration closes on November 30: learn more and register at: <https://www.nbacaes.org/jan2018-retreat>.

As an additional part of this work, the NBA Mental Health Initiative is in conversation with Dr. Frieda Brown, who has been teaching crisis counseling for more than 30 years and was part of a national clinical response team that served victims of Hurricane Katrina.



Photos provided by Week of Compassion

We know that post-Harvey recovery will be long-term: with the hurricane lasting for 10 days in Texas, research projections indicate that the recovery phase could last 3+ years. Your Disciples ministries are collaborating together to ensure that Houston-area affected clergy, families, and communities are equipped and cared for in the journey ahead.

Care for the Journey, January 3-5, 2018: We invite Houston-area Disciples clergy and their families affected by Hurricane Harvey to this wellness retreat. Thank you!

*With hopes to support the prioritization of mental health and wellness in the life of the church, the **Mental Health Initiative** aims to establish the necessary awareness and understanding required to counter stigma and change the landscape of conversation regarding mental illness and disorders within the church. Learn more at www.nbacaes.org/mental-health.*