



UPDATE: ONGOING U.S. HURRICANE RECOVERY

As the devastating hurricanes of 2017 fade further from memory, those who live in the affected areas know that recovery isn't measured in weeks or months, but years. We continue to work with local dioceses to help these communities rebuild and flourish. Here is an update on some of our efforts.

TEXAS: The Dioceses of Texas and West Texas were severely impacted by Hurricane Harvey. Last year the Diocese of Texas identified seven parish "hubs," and this year we anticipate four more will be added. The work of these hubs varies by the needs of each community, and includes everything from home rebuilding and repair to domestic violence counseling to organizing communities for recovery work.

In the Diocese of West Texas, the current focus is on identifying and assisting with unmet needs for recovering households. A mini-grant program was offered to congregations in the 15 affected counties to provide aid for household goods, rebuilding and repairs.

FLORIDA: In Central Florida, several churches in the Orlando area have taken lead roles in supporting displaced families, mainly from Puerto Rico. The Diocese of Southeast Florida is concentrating its

response in Marathon Key, which was hard hit by Hurricane Irma, focusing on affordable housing for low-wage workers. They have bought an abandoned apartment complex, which the diocese and local congregations will restore this year. And in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael last year, the Diocese of Central Gulf Coast is planning to launch a program to expand parish ministries in the broader Panama City area.

PUERTO RICO: The Diocese of Puerto Rico continues to focus primarily on housing reconstruction initiatives. Since Hurricane Maria struck, more than 57,500 families have received support through diocesan recovery programs. This year we expect the long-term recovery program to expand further, and will include the addition of "Savings with Education" activities.

THE VIRGIN ISLANDS: To empower and equip communities in the Diocese of the Virgin Islands, a mini-grants program was launched last year. These grants are helping to support wellness programs for clergy who were impacted by the hurricanes and to expand existing ministries so they can offer more meals, hygiene kits, pastoral support, and specialized care for the elderly.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

WORKING TOGETHER FOR LASTING CHANGE

As you know, the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was one of the most damaging in recent history, with Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria causing destruction throughout Florida, Texas, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and other parts of the US and Caribbean. In March, Episcopal Relief & Development held its board meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, giving board members an opportunity to visit our programs in Puerto Rico as well as the Virgin Islands, and to see first hand our long-term recovery work. It was both humbling and inspiring to celebrate all that has been accomplished as well as witness the ongoing recovery, made possible through the generosity and labor of so many.

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Maria, the Diocese of Puerto Rico, with support from Episcopal Relief & Development, played an enormous role in the emergency response across the island, serving close to 100,000 families (about 300,000 people) with the provision of basic goods like food packets, hygiene kits, medicines and medical care, reaching deep into rural communities.

Now that the emergency response phase has concluded, the Diocese of Puerto Rico is focused on building resilience across the island. For example, the diocese is strengthening the economic opportunities for marginalized groups through a micro-enterprise coaching program for single mothers who are still struggling as a result of Hurricane Maria's impact. This will enable them to withstand and recover more quickly from the next hurricane.

Across the Virgin Islands, Episcopal Relief & Development and the diocese initially provided cash and cash vouchers for food, water and critical supplies. Episcopal Relief & Development also targeted support for drinking water, tarps, plywood and nails.

With the long-term response underway, the diocese has launched a parish-based program with funding from Episcopal Relief & Development that offers meals, hygiene kits, pastoral support and specialized care for the elderly, who are among the most vulnerable post-disaster. Soon the diocese will be ready to welcome volunteers who want to help in the rebuilding efforts, and in so doing strengthen communities for the long-term.

I came back from my visit to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands inspired by the work that our partners are doing to help ensure communities are resilient for the long haul. Thank you for making this work possible.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Rob".

Robert W. Radtke
President & CEO



PROGRAM: FOSTERING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The number of climate-influenced disasters has doubled in the past 20 years. For this reason, Episcopal Relief & Development has made fostering climate resilience one of our three main program priorities. While communities' vulnerability and resilience differ, we always work to empower our local partners to build on their assets. Our experience has shown that a community is better able to respond and recover from a disaster if they have addressed several key issues: environmental preparedness; food security; economic development; water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH); and disaster management.

Environmental preparedness is the best defense. We're helping communities protect their land through tree planting and by preventing deforestation and soil erosion. We also help them understand where they're most vulnerable and how they can protect themselves before disaster strikes.

To promote **food security**, we're working in communities to expand access to food and help families feed themselves while protecting the environment. We support small-scale and family farms with agricultural tools and seeds, and we train farmers on techniques related to climate-smart agriculture, care for animals, crop diversification and sustainable land management.

Economic development is an essential part of resilience. It's hard for communities to recover from disastrous events if they lack the financial resources. Our programs help communities maximize their earning power by providing

management and financial training to start and expand small businesses – through savings and loan groups, micro-insurance and livestock. As households and communities grow stronger economically, they're less susceptible to shocks and stresses and can better cope with climate-related events.

Water, sanitation and hygiene are basic necessities of life. We've established programs that enable communities to prevent the spread of potentially deadly diseases, something that's especially critical in times of disaster. Through our partnerships, we help communities build latrines and create clean and safe water sources for drinking, cooking and other household use. We also promote sanitation and hygiene by educating communities on hand washing.

Our **disaster management** efforts support the work of our partners and participant communities by helping them anticipate, respond to, cope with and recover from climate-influenced hazards and events. Our partnerships provide critical emergency assistance to alleviate suffering, address trauma, build resilience and jump-start economic recovery. And our practical and pastoral support continues long after the immediate crisis has passed.

As we work to foster climate resilience, our greatest assets are our partners and their years of expertise in their respective areas. Their know-how alongside our technical assistance is fueling our next-level approach to this vital work.

A NOTE FROM BETSY: GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION



This past week, colleagues and over 50 volunteers gathered in Houston for Episcopal Relief & Development's Network Meeting. We shared the real impact that gifts from churches and parishioners have, reaching women, children and communities globally. We visited rural and low-income communities that are still rebuilding – physically and emotionally – from Hurricane Harvey and witnessed what long-term partnerships can achieve.

People also shared with me thoughtful ways in which they are

giving financial support as well as their time. One volunteer said she used her required IRA withdrawal – which she didn't need – to make a special gift. Another long-time supporter shared how he has planned ahead to make Episcopal Relief & Development the beneficiary of a gift annuity.

Through their time and financial support, these women and men are God's love in action. The same is true of you. I'm so grateful for all you do.

The Matthew²⁵
Legacy Society

PLANNED GIVING: CONTINUE YOUR STEWARDSHIP

You can ensure that the work of creating lasting change in the world will continue for many years to come by making a bequest or other planned gift to Episcopal Relief & Development through our Matthew 25 Legacy Society.

Society members sustain the work of Episcopal Relief & Development through planned gifts such as bequests, life income gifts and charitable trusts. These gifts deepen and strengthen our work across the globe in a lasting, transformative way.

The Reverend Canon Patricia Taylor has listed Episcopal Relief & Development in her will by giving a percentage of whatever remains in her estate after she passes.

As a clergy person, mother, grandmother and great grandmother, Pat feels joy knowing that her care for the world will live on when she's gone. She chose to support Episcopal Relief & Development because she values our sustainable approach. As she explains, "The programs are being implemented by local people on



the ground who are from the countries themselves, not by someone flying in and flying out. And the administrative costs are low, so the money goes to the programs not for non-program purposes."

Planned gifts are what make it possible for us to stay in communities when those places or issues are no longer in the headlines. Your legacy gifts allow us to strengthen the capacity of our partners, to support them in piloting cutting-edge approaches, and to do the research, monitoring and evaluation that allows us to continually improve.

TO LEARN MORE, CONTACT US AT 1-855-312-4325. YOU CAN ALSO FIND INFORMATION AT [EPISCOPALRELIEF.ORG/PLANNEDGIVING](https://episcopalrelief.org/plannedgiving).