

## Digest?

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# The Call

## Digest

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Bishop Taylor asks church members to pray while northern Holstonians adjust to unseasonable snow.

November 1, 2012

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# Within dark desperation, sparks of hope

By Susan Kim

**E**ntire coastal towns underwater. Millions without power. A paralyzed New York City. Damage that can't even be tallied until the water recedes. Yet within the devastation left by Hurricane Sandy, The United Methodist Church is offering sparks of hope.

Joseph Ewoodzie, disaster response coordinator for the New York Conference, was, by the hour, naming more and more communities with what he calls "major hits" by Hurricane Sandy.

But as Ewoodzie received calls reporting new damage, he also received news that churches were opening their doors to evacuees, checking on communities, and praying for people who will go home only to find they've lost everything.

In Shelton, Conn., where power outages were spotty, the Shelton First United Methodist Church was open for people without power to charge their cell phones and simply touch base, as severe pockets of damage were revealed, said the Rev. Heather McClendon Sinclair, pastor.

"Aside from opening up the church, our response at the moment is to use a call list we put together before the hurricane to make sure everyone is okay. After tonight into tomorrow, when the waters recede, we will be stepping up the cleanup response."

As requests streamed in for UMCOR's cleaning buckets and health kits, Ewoodzie wished to remind people that recovery in his state will be going on long after Hurricane Sandy leaves the headlines.

"The real ministry awaits us in the months, and even years, to come," he said. "Let us stay with the affected people until they recover. Let them feel confident that we will stay with them until they make a healthy, holistic recovery."



## HOW TO HELP

Help the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) help others. Write a check to your local church with "2012 Hurricanes, Advance #3021787" on the memo line. You can also text the word RESPONSE to 80888 to give an immediate \$10 donation. ■

UMCOR has issued \$10,000 emergency grants to the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, Greater New Jersey Conference, New York Conference, New York Disaster Interfaith Services, and the North Carolina Conference.

Even as the US. reeled from the storm, Haiti and other Caribbean countries in the storm's path were also struggling to recover. The United Methodist Church was helping to meet the needs of storm survivors in Haiti, where Hurricane Sandy killed 51 people.

Because of UMCOR's support and emphasis on disaster preparedness, response in Haiti was strengthened, reported UMCOR's head of mission in Haiti. "I think organizations based in heavily affected areas were able to respond with what they had on hand -- which is good news that preparedness planning is helping to mitigate some of the storm effects," she said. "But needs in Haiti -- as well as in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, and Jamaica -- are serious and ongoing. As communications increase, UMCOR continues to support its local Caribbean partners as they meet the needs of hurricane survivors." ■

## Judicial Council upholds security of appointment

**(UMNS)** The top court of the United Methodist Church has upheld church rules that ensure security of appointment for elders and associate clergy members, striking down legislation passed by the denomination's lawmaking assembly last spring.

The church's General Conference, meeting in Tampa, Fla., had

approved on May 1 a much-debated piece of legislation that would have deleted language in the church's "Book of Discipline" ensuring security of appointment. The legislation also would have added steps for discontinuing elders and associate members from receiving an appointment. A churchwide Study of Ministry Commission had proposed the changes as a way to replace ineffective pastors.

However, the church's Judicial Council, meeting Oct. 24-27 in Elk Grove Village, ruled that the General Conference action was in violation of the church's constitution. ■

# Holston prays, adjusts to unusual weather

**H**olston members lifted up prayers for brothers and sisters battling Hurricane Sandy in other parts of the country, while making the best of a bizarre but picturesque pre-Halloween snow in southwest Virginia and upper east Tennessee.

Meanwhile, Holston's disaster response coordinator anticipated that "cleaning buckets" and Early Response Team workers might be needed to help the hard-hit Northeastern Jurisdiction.

"I expect the Northeastern Jurisdiction, because of the size of the storm ... may not have the resources to respond and would ask for assistance," said Jim Fetzer. "As with all disasters, it will take time for all the damage assessments and response resource assessments to be completed before we hear anything about a request for deployment."

In the Alcoa Conference Center, Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor sent a request for Holston to pray for those whose Halloween week quickly turned tragic with the arrival of Hurricane Sandy.

"Social media and news media now allow us to be more aware of how people are affected by catastrophes like Hurricane Sandy," Taylor said. "As we hear these stories and see these images, let us be in prayer for those who are and will be affected by circumstances beyond their control."

A few power outages and closed schools and offices were reported within Holston boundaries on Oct. 30, with additional snow expected in higher elevations overnight.

The Rev. David Tabor, Tazewell District superintendent, measured 12 inches of snow in his parsonage backyard but said the roads were clear. The district parsonage and office are located in Tazewell, Va.

"Last night was pretty nasty, though, and we're supposed to get five to 11 inches more tonight," Tabor said on Tuesday, Oct. 30. "I went ahead and called off the charge conferences. I would hate for someone to get injured in this."

The Rev. Meg Taylor said that Wytheville, Va., experienced winds at 45-50 miles per hour the night Hurricane Sandy hammered the northeast coast. On the morning after (Oct. 30), her parsonage lawn was lightly dressed with one inch of snow. Further north in the district, Grayson County received two to five inches.

"Most of us are just amazed we never lost power," said Taylor, Wytheville District superintendent. "The news said that 718 people in Wythe County are without power." Thirty-five of the district's 115 churches are located in Wythe County, she said.

Elsewhere in Holston, church members continued with their fall festival and trunk-or-treat preparations, in many cases moving inside during unseasonably low temperatures.

"Rising Fawn had planned for our Community Halloween Block Party to be an outdoor event," said the Rev. Wayne Cook, pastor of the Chattanooga District church. "We are moving indoors to the fellowship hall."

Allen Memorial (Cleveland District), Concord (Oak Ridge District), Pleasant View (Abingdon District), and Mount Olivet-Galax (Wytheville District) also moved their fall celebrations inside this week.

Other Holston members posted snowy scenes online that looked more wonderland-ish than ghostly or ghoully. ■



Autumn leaves and snow conspire on an unusual day at United Methodist-affiliated Emory & Henry College. (Courtesy of E&H)

**The Call** is the news source for Holston Conference. ● The Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church includes 897 churches in east Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and north Georgia. ● Our resident bishop is Mary Virginia Taylor. ● Our executive assistant is the Rev. Carol Wilson. ● Our office address is P.O. Box 850, 217 South Rankin Road, Alcoa, TN 37701. ● (865) 690-4080 ● [www.Holston.org](http://www.Holston.org) ● [thecall@holston.org](mailto:thecall@holston.org) or [info@holston.org](mailto:info@holston.org) ● [Facebook.Holston.org](https://www.facebook.com/Holston.org) ● [Twitter @TheCall\\_Holston](https://twitter.com/TheCall_Holston) ● Free e-news: [thecalltwo.holston.org](http://thecalltwo.holston.org)