



Spring 2022 Report to the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference UCC



Members of Conference Disaster Ministry Team: Karl Jones, Maureen Duffy-Guy, Jenny Smith, Ray Riegel, Jason Stump, Sherie Mohn, Jeff Butz, Gary Rarick

In 2021 the Conference Disaster Team worked in response to multiple storms and events in southeast PA. Ongoing work includes disaster case management, planning for long term recovery groups in Philadelphia, Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware Counties, and working with individual cases in Berks County.

The work of supporting the rebuild in the Eastwick Community of Philadelphia goes on:

1. The Unmet Needs Roundtable of the Southeast PA Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (SEPA VOAD) now meets every other Friday morning at 10 am to coordinate efforts.
2. We continue to work with the national setting of the UCC, who are providing the services of several Partners in Service: Judy Moore, who served as the Volunteer Manager for the recovery work until March 23, 2022; Jaye Herrick, who served as the Construction Site Manager, until December 15, 2021. In February Eileen San Pedro joined the team as the Construction Site Manager and just recently Sharon Sgriccia replaced Judy as the Volunteer Manager.
3. The national setting of the UCC has provided a \$5,000 grant to the Eastwick Unmet Needs Roundtable and the PSEC serves as the financial manager for the EUNR, managing a \$50,000 grant from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy.
4. The tool trailer owned by the Penn Northeast Conference is located at the Eastwick United Methodist Church for work teams to use.
5. Volunteer groups have supported the work, even under difficult COVID circumstances.
6. Salt and Light Community Church has provided hospitality and lodging for our volunteers and is a vital part of the ministry.
7. Other PSEC churches have sent volunteers, housed volunteers, or provided other support.
8. We have set the end of 2022 as the close-out date for our work.

We have been working with our government partners and county coordinators to prepare for long-term recovery and case management in response to Ida. This will be a long-term process. This is a federally-declared disaster. As of January 10, there have been 78,014 registrations. FEMA has awarded \$100,432,306.82 to Pennsylvanians. I lead a coordination call for PAVOAD each Friday morning at 9 AM. Currently we have work going on in every county of PSEC, except for Schuylkill, due to Hurricane Ida.

In 2021 we were able to secure disaster grants for three of our churches whose communities had damage due to Hurricane Ida. Several of our pastors are involved with disaster response in their communities. In addition, Jenny Smith serves as the co-chair of the Emotional and Spiritual Care sub-committee of the MontCo Disaster Recovery Partnership.

The Team has done a great job in 2021 encouraging our churches to participate in putting together cleanup and other kits. We maintain geographically located drop off sites. Our church volunteers maintain this inventory and deplore these kits as needed. In 2021 we deployed more than 200 buckets to survivors and a truck load more to CWS in Maryland.

The Team has been involved with refugee support and resettlement, primarily Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Jenny Smith and I meet monthly with the other Conference Disaster Coordinators spiritual care providers, and our UCC Disaster Minister, Lesli Remaly. Jenny is now the Emotional and Spiritual Care lead for our disaster ministry team. She also serves on the national Emotional and Spiritual Care Team.

In November we started the planning process for a campaign in conjunction with the Susquehanna Mission Team of the Penn Northeast Conference for the High Five for Disaster Relief initiative to raise money for disaster ministries during Epiphany 2022. That campaign ended with a virtual celebration that was held on Sunday, February 27. Overall, the campaign raised a total of \$9,191.49. \$3,711.96 was donated by PSEC churches to the campaign or directly to a current project. Some of the PSEC funds were used to provide seed funding for a car for a family in Berks County that lost its vehicle in Hurricane Ida. This family's children need to be transported regularly to Philadelphia for medical treatment, so a car is a life-giving necessity. Other PSEC funds have helped resolve life safety issues in a home in the Eastwick project of Philadelphia.

In January I became the Eastern Area lead and Communications Lead for PAVOAD and serve on the Board of Directors. I also serve on the Council for Southeast PA VOAD, on the Berks County COAD and the Schuylkill County COAD, and on the Long-Term Recovery Groups of Montgomery, Chester, and Bucks counties. I am ending my service as UCC representative on the Community Preparedness Committee of NVOAD. I will be elected to the Communications Committee of NVOAD in May.

If you would like to get involved in this vital ministry, please feel free to contact me or any other members of the team. One of the ways your church can get involved is by joining the **Willing to Respond** program. It is simple – go to the webpage, www.willingtorespond.org, register your church, name a local church contact, and begin to use the resources. Zion Union Church, Maxatawny, was one of the first churches in the nation to register. Look for information on this campaign on the Conference website or at the Spring meeting of the Conference.

Shalom,
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