

October 2, 2024

To the People of the Diocese of East Carolina:

Those of us who have lived in eastern North Carolina for any length of time will eventually encounter the terror of a hurricane. We listen to forecasts and track the emerging patterns of each storm that approaches our shores. We prepare our homes, businesses and churches for the wind and water that will come. If a direct hit is predicted, we might even evacuate to a safer location. Then, once the storm has passed, we go back outside and assess the damage. We check on neighbors and see to the needs of our communities.

With Hurricane Helene, those of us living in eastern North Carolina have been spared from the sort of devastation that we have seen too often in the past. At the same time, we are deeply conscious of the great suffering being experienced by so many, including family and friends in Florida, Georgia, eastern Tennessee and, most certainly, in western North Carolina. And so, we respond to the needs of our neighbors.

In the materials provided on our Diocesan website, [linked here](#), you will be able to visit some of the Episcopal dioceses located in regions that have been most seriously affected. Feel welcome to visit these sites and make direct gifts as you feel so moved.

You will also find a link to resources offered by Episcopal Relief & Development, with the clear option to make donations to their general hurricane response work. ERD has been a strong partner with East Carolina in years past when we have been impacted by hurricanes. You can trust them to use your donations well.

Earlier this week, the Episcopal bishops of the southeastern United States gathered on a Zoom call, some twenty strong, and checked in with each other about the damages we had experienced and the needs we were facing. It was brutally clear that our help is most needed in western North Carolina, and so we pledged our financial support for Bishop José McLoughlin and the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina for the care of their own people and for their work in rebuilding the communities where they live and serve. On behalf of our diocese, I have directed a gift to Western North Carolina from the Walker Fund. With this letter, I am also inviting the individuals and congregations of this diocese to consider making gifts that will directly support the work of the Diocese of Western North Carolina. You can send a check to our Diocesan offices marked “Western North Carolina” or make an online donation using the link provided on our website. As the funds come in to us, we will pass them on.

You may already have begun gathering supplies to ship west. God bless you! From the Diocese of Western North Carolina, from Episcopal Relief and Development, and from the Office of Governor Roy Cooper, we are being cautioned that it is too early to plan trips into

the western part of our state. As this changes, and as we learn about needs, we will offer information about what is needed and how to get it there. We are coordinating these efforts with our next door neighbors in the Diocese of North Carolina who may, in some of their communities, actually have access to staging sites. Check back to our [Hurricane Helene Relief page](#) for details.

Finally, please know that the time will come when individuals and work parties will be welcomed into western North Carolina. Again, we will do our best to encourage opportunities for our people to participate in these sorts of efforts. I won't ever forget traveling to the Gulf Coast from Michigan with a group of folks from our congregation who wanted to serve after Hurricane Katrina. There will be lots of opportunities for us to serve our neighbors in need.

Our Lord Jesus demonstrated his love and compassion for those who suffered. May we who follow Jesus also follow the example he gave to us, to love one another as he has loved us, and to express that love in deep acts of service.

God's blessings to you,



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