

PCC Disaster Readiness and Response Team Report 2018

The Penn Central Conference (PCC) Disaster Readiness and Response (DR&R) Team is composed of representatives from each of the eight Associations of Penn Central Conference. These members are active in encouraging churches in their Associations to be involved in disaster readiness and response opportunities. The Team currently meets twice a year, once in June at the Conference's Annual Meeting in Selinsgrove and once in November at Mission Central, Mechanicsburg, an UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) facility where the Team meets in the morning and volunteers by checking health, school, or birthing kits in the afternoon.

Between meetings, the DR&R Coordinators circulate current information regarding training and other useful information including materials about UCC Disaster Ministries and webinars hosted by FEMA or other agencies that are available to the DR&R Team.

The PCC Disaster Coordinators spent the week of November in Volusia County, FL working on repairing homes that were damaged as a result of Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. They stayed at Union Congregational UCC in Holly Hill, outside Daytona Beach, FL.

The PCC Disaster Coordinators spent the month of February 2018 in Beaumont and Port Arthur, TX advising Plymouth Congregational UCC and the Southeast Texas Community Development Corporation in establishing a disaster recovery site to house volunteers and then assist in the repairing of thirteen units of low income housing flooded as a result of Hurricane Harvey in August 2017.

The PCC Disaster Coordinators spent the month of April 2018 at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS where Bill Matten served as assistant construction supervisor and Ellen Matten served as volunteer coordinator.

Penn Central Conference has a joint membership in Pennsylvania VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) with the other three UCC Conferences in Pennsylvania. The PCC Disaster Coordinators and members of the DR&R Team have attended state wide, regional and national VOAD meetings.

DR&R Team members are available to UCC congregations to help them develop disaster preparedness plans for their churches, to present workshops or make presentations to their PCC Associations. In addition, the Team prepares a display for Annual Meeting that provides readiness information for families and churches, and provides information on volunteer opportunities in disaster recovery throughout the United States and overseas.

In response to the needs of others suffering from natural or man-made disasters, a number of churches in Penn Central Conference have taken groups on work camps to Back Bay Mission or to UCC Disaster Ministries sites in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, West Virginia, Florida, and Louisiana. Other PCC churches have assembled clean up buckets and school kits for Church World Service while others have volunteered their facilities to become emergency shelters if needed in a disaster.

Respectfully submitted

Bill and Ellen Matten
Conference Disaster Coordinators
PCC Readiness and Response Team