



September 29, 2006

Dear friend of scouting ministries:

It's been nearly one year since Katrina, the nation's worst natural disaster, struck Louisiana, Mississippi, and New Orleans.

The Rev. Martha Orphe, a United Methodist mission zone director for the greater New Orleans area, reports that 80 percent of the residents have lost homes and churches remain mired in muck and mold. She says, "United Methodist ministry in the area is hurt, broken, and rebuilding."

Churches and scouts cannot look to the United Methodist Committee on Relief for assistance with rebuilding because the agency's mandate does not include repairing churches or camps. Instead, the agency provides services to Katrina survivors.

Scout executives in the three-state area note that the destruction of churches in the area means scouts have lost property, equipment and meeting places. Moreover Hurricane Katrina severely damaged scout camps, and rebuilding these camps has not been considered a priority by church or civic groups.

The Pine Burr Area Boy Scout Council based in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, says Camp Tiak suffered extensive wind damage and thousands of trees were down throughout the camp making it inaccessible and useless.

The Pine Burr Council also reports that hundreds of scouts and their families have lost everything they owned. Scouts have been asked to send the troop uniforms (shirts, pants and shorts), but there are countless other needs. Council staff report that the boys have been so busy cleaning up the community and helping senior citizens they haven't had much time to think of their own needs. "They take their minds off their own losses by helping others," said a leader.

Hurricane Katrina also damaged two Girl Scout Camps in Southeast Louisiana. Camp Covington, in St. Tammany Parish, is still not useable. The camp lost more than 90 percent of its trees and many of its buildings. It is not known when work will begin to rebuild this camp. Tents and cabins at Girl Scout Camp Whispering Pines, located in Tangipahoa Parish, were damaged, but the camp was able to offer modified tent camping this summer.

While damage to scout camps was severe, it pales in comparison to damages inflicted upon churches where scouts meet and upon the homes of scouting families.

Funds are needed to:

- reestablish scouting in storm-damaged communities, renovate and rebuild scout facilities, and cover the financial needs of troops;
- provide assistance to scout leaders and their families who lost their homes, possessions, and jobs;
- rebuild churches where troops meet and replace lost and damaged equipment.

Conference presidents of United Methodist Men know of churches and scouting units that have suffered major losses. Without adequate insurance and without support from the United Methodist Committee on Relief, scouts are overwhelmed by the needs of their churches and their troops, but their attention and funds have focused on rebuilding homes.

If you are financially able to contribute to the **Katrina Scout Emergency Response Fund**, your gift will do more than just help scouts. The scouts you help will help rebuild these communities and the lives, homes, and businesses that were lost.

We can trust conference presidents to give these funds to those most in need. In some cases, they will give it to churches that host scout troops. In other cases, they will give it to troops or the camp sites. In any case, funds will be given to those that have been forgotten by other agencies.

You may want to invite scouts and adult leaders in your local church to participate in this effort. Ask them to imagine what would happen to their equipment if a hurricane hit your church. They will want to help troops rebuild their meeting rooms and replace lost equipment.

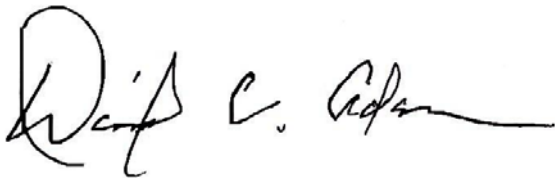
While these churches and scouting organizations will be grateful for any contribution, I can't imagine any local church that can't send at least \$100. Perhaps you can send more.

Checks should be made payable to the **General Commission on United Methodist Men** and designated for the **Katrina Scout Emergency Response Fund**. They may be sent to the address above.

We can't do it all - there's just too much. But we can do our part.

Thank you on behalf of scouts in the three-state area.

In the name and spirit of the risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. David Adams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "A".

REV. DAVID ADAMS
General Secretary
General Commission United Methodist Men

Enclosures: Response Envelope and Response Card

www.gcumm.org