

March 21, 2011

Dear Friends,

I join you in lifting up the people of Japan in prayer during this time of crisis. We grieve with them and stand with them in solidarity. Once again, I am struck by the extravagant generosity of United Methodists who are supporting UMCOR's efforts to bring healing and hope to Japan. We have received thousands of phone calls, emails, Facebook posts, and donations from people whose hearts are aching for the people of Japan and who are looking for meaningful ways to respond. Many churches in our connection are collecting offerings to raise money for UMCOR. I want to share with you how we are responding on your behalf to the great needs.

UMCOR's Response: On Friday, March 11, the General Board of Global Ministries reached out to missionaries and partners in Japan to confirm their safety and ask how we can help. The Wesley Center, affiliated with United Methodist Women, is offering shelter to those who are displaced. UMCOR set up an Advance account for the Pacific Emergency. Once we understood better what the scope of the disaster was, we changed the name to "[Japan Emergency](#)" and updated the description:

"UMCOR is working through relief and church partners in Japan to respond and provide immediate assistance and long-term rehabilitation. With these partners, UMCOR is meeting the most basic humanitarian needs in northern Japan such as providing clean drinking water, food, cooking and eating supplies, clothing, and fuel for heating."

We are honoring the request of the Japanese government who has asked that outside groups not come to Japan. UMCOR staff generally does not go into disaster areas as first responders and we are working through trusted partners who have existing networks on the ground in the affected areas. We have sent an emergency grant to church partner, [United Church of Christ in Japan](#). They are using the funds to distribute food, clean water, clothing, and heating fuel. Local churches are being used as distribution sites to provide basic necessities to survivors. UMCOR also sent an emergency grant to GlobalMedic, a trusted partner and first responder, to provide relief to affected survivors in the form of medical care, and access to clean drinking water, supplies, and food.

We anticipate working with our partners to direct your gifts to earthquake and tsunami survivors in Japan as needs and plans for response are identified. All grant requests go through a rigorous approval process and require a reporting of how the funds are used. It is important to us that we are good stewards of your gifts. We are always accountable for how UMCOR funds are used. Two independent charity watch groups, Charity Navigator and American Institute of Philanthropy, have affirmed UMCOR's trustworthiness by recognizing us with the highest ratings.

Volunteers: While our hearts may feel that we must do something besides "just" writing a check, please keep in mind John Wesley's appeal to do no harm. The situation in Japan is not conducive to sending volunteers. It is important to allow the well established government organizations to organize the response, particularly while they are in the crucial rescue phase.

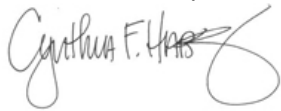
Relief Supplies: Many supplies are available in Japan and sending funds directly to our partners supports the local economy while ensuring that they are getting exactly what they need. I am always sad when I visit Haiti and other disaster affected areas and see the unopened boxes of clothes, medicine, and equipment that go unused because well meaning people have misdirected their good will. A practical example was pointed out to me by a physician in Haiti, who explained that it is important to purchase

medicine in the country because the directions for use will be in the native language. An additional concern is that sending an unsolicited shipment into the disaster area runs the risk of hampering relief efforts, clogging runways, and creating an added burden to the system because there is no efficient way to distribute the shipment. Please consider your local thrift store for these kinds of thoughtful donations.

Kit Ministry: We are fortunate that because of faithful giving throughout the year, the UMCOR depots are well stocked with health kits. Through authorized channels and a coordinated effort with the Japanese authorities, when the time is appropriate, UMCOR is prepared to send thousands of health kits to Japan in response to this emergency. Because we have a surplus of health kits our priority is keeping our depots stocked with other [kits such as cleaning buckets, layette and school kits](#). We welcome your contributions so that we can send them where they are most needed around the world. I am reminded daily of the suffering of people in places like Cote d'Ivoire, Armenia, and here in the United States where Spring storms and flooding are creating new challenges. The relief supplies you lovingly assemble and collect are a blessing to the people who receive them.

Continued prayers: UMCOR is committed to standing with the people of Japan into the recovery phase. We will continue working through our church and relief partners to provide shelter, food, and clean water to survivors of this crisis. Regular updates can be found in the [UMCOR Hotline](#), on our [website](#), and on [Facebook](#). Please continue to hold the people of Japan in your prayers. I am overwhelmed by the outpouring of love into the world by our United Methodist Church.
Grace and peace,

The Reverend Cynthia Fierro Harvey

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia F. Harvey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Deputy General Secretary, UMCOR
Connecting the Church in mission

General Board of Global Ministries
The United Methodist Church