

# **Bishop's Response Team of the Alabama-West Florida Conference**

- What is the purpose of the Bishop's Response Team?

The Bishop's Response Team of the Alabama-West Florida Conference responds and assists a congregation experiencing a crisis or trauma so that healing can begin. The team is trained to care for and provide support to those who are hurting. The trained team members are both laity and clergy.

- What situations might call for the Bishop's Response Team?

The Bishop may send the team after any kind of crisis, traumatic event, or unexpected change that may occur in a congregation. Some examples include sudden death of a pastor, embezzlement or misuse of funds by pastor or layperson, clergy sexual misconduct, laity sexual misconduct directly involving the congregation, sudden sabbatical by a pastor, church closures, sexual abuse of a church member at a church camp or other church event, and any other instance as requested by the Bishop.

- Why is it important to have a Bishop's Response Team?

The AWF Conference is committed to helping all churches be vital congregations. Churches, like families, can benefit from attentive listening to help guide them through the pain and grief associated with crisis, trauma, and unexpected changes so that they may be vital and healthy congregations.

- What is the procedure for asking for a team?

The Bishop's Response Team is sent at the discretion of the resident Bishop. If your church has experienced a crisis or traumatic event, contact your District Superintendent to inquire about receiving assistance from the Bishop's Response Team.

- What can we expect to happen when this team is assigned to our church?

The response team comes to you. When a team is assigned to your church, you can expect a loving and helpful response to the congregation, the staff, the pastor(s), and all others affected by the crisis, traumatic event, or unexpected change. Listening to everyone's story will help move individuals, congregations, and staff members through a healthy grief and healing process. The team will encourage people to speak openly about the emotions they may feel, learn about power, vulnerability and grief work, reflect on the spiritual aspect of healing and grieving, and provide the assistance necessary in determining what each congregation needs in order to heal.

- What is the cost to receive this assistance?

There is no cost. The team is composed of volunteers. Training was provided by our giving of apportionments.

- Who is the Bishop's Response Team Coordinator in the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference?  
Rev. June Jernigan, Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Ministerial Services.

