

Disaster responders plan more aid for victims of Hurricane Matthew

By [The LCMS](#) on October 8, 2016 in [Reporter](#), [Top Story 0](#)



Homes lay in ruins after the passing of Hurricane Matthew in Les Cayes, Haiti, Oct. 6. Two days after the storm rampaged across the country's remote southwestern peninsula, authorities and aid workers still lack a clear picture of what they fear is the country's biggest disaster in years. (AP Photo/Dieu Nalio Chery)

By Roger Drinnon

LCMS disaster responders continue to assess the capacity to provide additional aid for hurricane-battered Haiti while also determining the overall impact of Hurricane Matthew, as it makes its way up the U.S. southeastern coastline.

Thanks to compassionate people in the LCMS who respond generously in the wake of disasters, and using funds already on hand for disaster response work, two aircraft were chartered to airdrop some 60,000 packaged meals and supplies to the people in the hardest-hit areas of Haiti.

On Oct. 6, LCMS leaders approved a \$10,000 grant to [Ministry in Mission](#), an LCMS Recognized Service Organization (RSO) coordinating this vital airdrop. Another 60,000 meals were provided for by other partner organizations.

"We are looking to work through area RSOs most capable of facilitating additional aid to Haiti victims in the form of providing food and clean water, Lutheran spiritual care and also tin roofs for some 280,000 victims whose homes were ravaged by fierce winds," said LCMS Disaster Response Director Rev. Ross Johnson.

"These RSOs have years of experience working in Haiti and have an understanding of its culture," Johnson continued. "We do all of this in the name of Christ. Compassionate spiritual care provided in His name — a hallmark of all LCMS World Relief and Human Care efforts at their finest — distinguishes what the Church does from what government agencies do in responding to disasters like this."

After strengthening to Category 5, Hurricane Matthew later became a Category-4 storm with reported destructive winds in excess of 140 miles per hour as it moved through the Caribbean.

Johnson estimates three tin roofs could be provided for roughly \$1,000. To achieve a goal of only a few hundred roofs, the cost quickly goes up to six figures. He also estimates that a half-million meals could cost about \$300,000 to purchase, ship and distribute, noting that the extent of the Synod's response is contingent upon what God provides through the Church.

Hurricane Matthew comes as [LCMS Disaster Response](#) resources have been strained this year amid the ongoing response to the recent flooding in Baton Rouge, La., and after the Synod's response to this year's California wildfires.

"In the midst of such terrible destruction, the Church has the opportunity to be Christ's hands and feet, responding to the needs of the suffering," said LCMS Disaster Response Manager Rev. Michael Meyer. "At the same time, the Church is making the bold confession that Christ is here in the midst of suffering, walking with those who are suffering, weeping with those who are weeping, through the various vocations of the Church and her members."

Here at home, Synod responders estimate it could take several days to assess the full impact of the hurricane, once the storm completes its projected course along the southeastern coastline. LCMS Disaster Response will assist the Synod's [Florida-Georgia District](#) responders, wherever needed, to determine the needs of any impacted churches, schools and families.

"We have been monitoring the situation for the past two days, maintaining contact with the circuit visitors in affected areas in the path of Hurricane Matthew," said LCMS Florida-Georgia District President Rev. Gregory Walton. "To this point, we are not aware of severe damage at any of our ministry locations, although several churches report roof damage and leaks."

If you would like to assist the LCMS in responding to this developing story through a donation, please call 888-930-4438 or click below.

[Give Now](#)

To donate by check, please make checks payable to "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" (or "LCMS"). On the memo line, write "Disaster Response/Relief." Mail your donation to The LCMS, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861. Gifts are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Roger Drinnon (roger.drinnon@lcms.org) is director of Editorial Services and Media Relations for LCMS Communications.

Posted October 8, 2016 / Updated October 11, 2016