

Report of Presbytery Disaster Response Task Force

Since January, 2018, Presbytery of Santa Barbara has received \$69,156.79 in contributions to be used for the recovery and resilience of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties adversely impacted by the Thomas Fire/Montecito Debris Flows disasters. \$53,669.85 has been distributed to organizations and individuals, based upon requests of minister members and distributed on behalf of congregations with personal knowledge of the particular needs. Such needs have included general assistance to organizations providing pastoral care, child care and small business needs that were not eligible for federal aid, bilingual care, and other assistance. As of December, the fund had a balance of \$15,486.94, to be used for recovery purposes not yet determined. Because new needs are still arising in the Long Term Recovery Committees of both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, the Task Force anticipates that we will have more opportunities to provide assistance.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has been actively involved, from providing initial grants individually for the Thomas Fire and for the Montecito Debris Flow, to sending National Response Team members to meet with and provide guidance to minister members and to Council regarding next courses, of action, to providing a presbytery-wide Compassion Fatigue workshop.

Then, in November, 2018, Ventura County was burdened with back-to-back disasters: the Borderline Bar and Grill shooting and Woolsey and Hill Fires. Presbytery determined the need to separate contributions intended for response and recovery in these events from contributions intended for the Thomas Fire/Montecito Debris Flows. Presbytery crafted separate fund descriptions and funding request forms for each disaster. Separate funds were set aside for those events. PDA provided initial grants of \$7500 for each of the events, and again sent National Response Team members to meet with clergy and community members in regards to both incidents. They met with members of three presbyteries: Santa Barbara, Pacific and San Fernando. As a result of follow-up communications, Synod Executive Mark Hong encouraged PDA to provide a resilience workshop to members of all three presbyteries. This workshop will occur this Saturday, on January 26, in Westlake. A \$450 fund request was made and approved to provide respite to a pastor not affiliated with PC(USA), but integral in the recovery of the community after the Borderline Bar & Grill shooting.

Per request of five clergy members of this presbytery who have been impacted by their ministries to our communities post-disasters, Presbytery applied to PDA for \$5000 for clergy respite. PDA approved the grant request, and monies are forthcoming.

It has been an honor to serve alongside my colleagues on this Task Force. We are unified in bringing Christ's presence through walking alongside those who are binding up emotional wounds incurred during this series of disasters, and alongside those who are identifying and ministering to those with financial needs.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Malloy, Chair