

August 15 2023

Hawai'i Fires

responding with partners in Maui

On Tuesday, August 8, gale-force winds rushed along the mountains of Maui, bringing down power lines, igniting grasslands, and contributing to what has become “America’s deadliest wildfire in more than a century”. An extremely dry summer, and winds as a result of Hurricane Dora, exacerbated the flames and the toll on land and people continues to mount.



Image shared by Disciples Pacific Southwest Region:
Waiola Church hall & Lahaina Hongwanji Mission Temple, Maui

As of this writing, at least 99 lives have been lost, and as authorities have searched 25% of the affected area, they expect the death toll to climb. Nearly 1500 people are staying at evacuation shelters as 2200 structures have been destroyed (85% of them residential). Hundreds of families have been placed in emergency temporary housing, and several thousand hotel and vacation rentals are being secured to house those displaced. Officials estimate such ‘temporary’ housing will be needed for 36 weeks or longer. ([CNN](#))

As neighbors across the mainland have followed the news, anxious for word from friends and family, and eager to help in any way possible, Week of Compassion has been in contact with Disciples colleagues, ecumenical partners, and local response leaders as they assess the situation for immediate response and long-term recovery plans.

Through Week of Compassion, Disciples are connecting with ecumenical partners on Maui, including Disciples immediately deployed with Week of Compassion partner [Children’s Disaster Services](#), offering a compassionate response and care focused on children, as parents navigate the first days of reaction and recovery. Local Disciples congregations on the neighboring island of O’ahu are preparing to support as needed amid immediate evacuation responses and with long-term engagement.

In the days, weeks, and months to come, Disciples will be ready to respond through Week of Compassion, engaging a network of ecumenical partners and local organizations. In ongoing coordination calls this week, **partners consistently reiterated that the most significant donation right now is money**. Week of Compassion’s emphasis to **PRAY - GIVE - STAY** provides the greatest impact in ways that best serve the needs of the affected community.

Contributions designated HAWAII FIRES
can be made [online](#), or sent by mail (POBox 1986, Indianapolis IN 46206).
100% of designated gifts address immediate response & long-term recovery.

Local government estimates for long-term recovery are nearing \$6 billion dollars, with a years-long timeline taking shape. The emotional and spiritual impacts on communities devastated by loss of life, loss of cultural and historical items, and the trauma of first-

responder teams will be significant and ongoing.

One of Week of Compassion's partners, Hawai'i VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), is very clear that local organizations are taking the lead, and Week of Compassion is grateful to partner with them as needed. **Those who know communities best are also best equipped to craft and implement an effective response.** Local partners will take stock of everything from neighborhood characteristics and familial languages, to cultural nuances, building materials, and land considerations that allow for rebuilding in ways that are just and equitable, preserving community and culture.

Week of Compassion joins Disciples in vigilant prayer, and generous partnership, for the people of Maui, for those providing first response and ongoing care, for what it will mean to rebuild and recover, and for all affected by this devastation and loss. May a Spirit of grace prevail, bringing comfort to all in need, and inspiring compassion and courage among communities near and far.

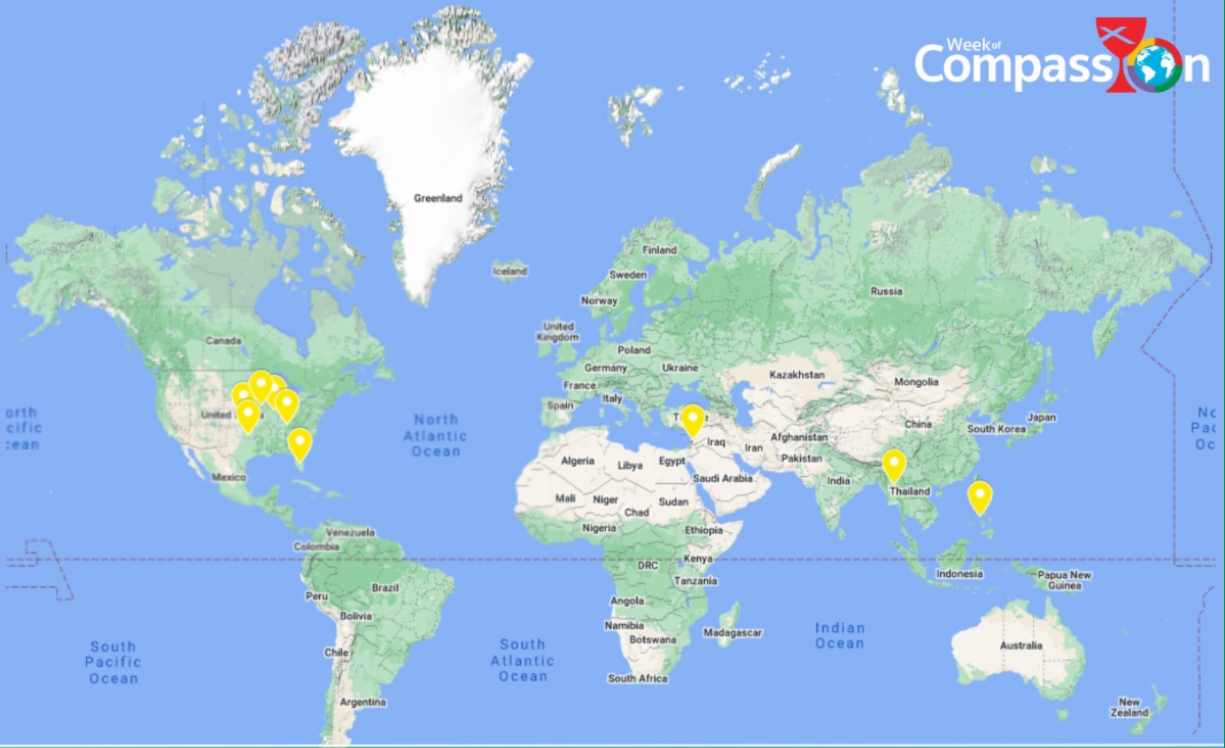
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What a joy it was to be together in Louisville at the July 29-August 1 **General Assembly**, our first in-person gathering after four years apart. Great conversations, new and renewed connections, engaging workshops, powerful worship, and meaningful resolutions filled our days together. Week of Compassion staff, board, partners, and supporters are grateful for the vision of the whole Disciples church, and to be part of this Kindom of God, within and among us.

Here are just a few highlights of our Assembly experience:


- **HELP BUILD HOPE:** framing a three-bedroom home right in the exhibit hall, to support western Kentucky tornado recovery -- [time-lapse video](#) (thanks to the OGMP Office of Communications!)
- **WORSHIP OFFERING:** lifting up the work of Disciples around the world, through the ministry of Week of Compassion -- [Highlights](#) video; [Responses](#) video; bilingual [prayer](#)
- **COMMUNITY CELEBRATION:** an evening of music, community, and partnership -- [welcome remarks](#) (Vy Nguyen); [closing thanks](#) (Courtney Richards)



responses since July 18 2023

 **ILLINOIS (2)**
- storm relief

 **FLORIDA**
- refugee support

 **KANSAS (3)**
- storm/flood relief

 **IOWA**
- storm relief

 **PHILIPPINES**
- typhoon response

 **OKLAHOMA (5)**
- storm relief

 **MYANMAR**
- emergency response

 **LEBANON**
- food & hygiene relief

 **KENTUCKY**
- flood relief

Click the map for an [interactive look](#) at Week of Compassion responses.

The **mission** of Week of Compassion is to work with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world, with a **vision** of a world where God's people transform suffering into hope.

Click the images to be part of this ministry.



volunteer
domestic disaster response



**immigrant and
refugee response**



give
to Week of Compassion

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