

# Love is a path forward



Week of Compassion is the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Your gifts to Week of Compassion bring hope out of despair, find blessings amid devastation, and help transform loss into new life. Your contributions bring tangible relief and change the course of lives.

When you give, you help rebuild communities recovering from disaster. You also empower farmers to grow new kinds of crops in a changing climate; you support refugees; you empower youth through education, and empower women through vocational opportunities. In so many different ways, your gifts of love have the power to transform lives.

Love is shelter. Love is a listening ear. Love is community. Love is a hopeful future. Love is a path forward. When all else seems lost, love remains.

**On Memorial Day 2019, tornadoes swept through the Miami Valley of Ohio, destroying thousands of homes and apartments and leaving a trail of downed trees and power lines in their wake.** Many of the tornado-affected families have had to relocate multiple times since the tornadoes due to substandard housing conditions and inflated rent.

Two years after the storm, the Stephens family were still unable to find adequate living quarters. The family of ten was forced to live apart. In addition to dealing with unscrupulous contractors, the family had to haggle with insurance companies as they tried to rebuild their home. The Stephenses, like so many other families, remained in temporary housing and separated, pending the completion of repairs.

Yet, all was not lost. The Stephens family connected with the Miami Valley Long-Term Recovery Operations Group, and volunteer teams finished the repairs.

Alongside these traditional home repair projects, and with support from Week of Compassion, the MVLTRG helped launch the Tornado Survivors' Pathways to Homeownership Project to help alleviate the housing crunch in the Dayton area. Volunteers and local nonprofits work together to transition "nuisance" properties and vacant lots into affordable, single-family housing options for tornado survivors who were displaced from rental housing, stabilizing both families and the community. First-time homeowners receive the support they need to build for their futures.

Sammy Deacon, Brethren Disaster Ministries Long-Term Project Leader, says "When you reach out to help someone else, the blessing comes back to you as well. An important aspect of the recovery effort is listening to people's stories and knowing you have the opportunity to help them—physically and spiritually."

With support for long-term recovery, including innovative programs like the Pathways to Homeownership project, Week of Compassion helps create opportunities for families to thrive after disasters. Because love remains.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

— 1 Cor. 13:13



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