



AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
NINTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT



Master Plan
for the
Disaster Relief

Reverend Ronald Sterling - Co-Coordinator
Reverend Chris Walker, Co-Coordinator
Reverend Vivian J. Ford, Co-Coordinator

Presiding Elder Albert L. Hyche, Montgomery Selma District
Presiding Elder Samuel Smith, Ozark Troy District
Presiding Elder David E. Reddick, Dothan Eufaula District
Presiding Elder Thomas E. Crossley, Tuskegee District
Presiding Elder Joseph Hall, Phenix District
Presiding Elder James E. Jackson, Camden District
Presiding Elder Ernest A. Rouse, Mobile District & President of the Council of Presiding Elders
Presiding Elder Dwight E. Dillard, Birmingham Florence Tuscaloosa District
Presiding Elder Oliver Allen, South Birmingham Huntsville Bessemer District
Presiding Elder Willis Huggins, West Birmingham Ensley Greensboro District

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PUBLIC STATEMENT

9th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Disaster Relief Plan of Action

From the Desk of James L. Davis, Servant Bishop

May 4, 2011

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

I greet each of you today in the Joy of Jesus the Christ. Today we give thanks to God for the remarkable progress we have realized and the abundant offers of assistance from across the country. Again, America has shown her softer side as she rallies to soothe the pain of those affected by last week's record-breaking storms. I am immensely grateful to each of you for your commitment to get the word out on how we will execute our plans to ease the pain and suffering of our fellow Alabamians affected by last week's storms.

I am pleased to announce the names of the Coordinators of this effort for the 9th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church: Reverend Ronald Sterling, Pastor of St. Paul AME Church, Smithfield; Reverend Chris Walker, Pastor of St. Matthew AME Church, Birmingham; and Reverend Vivian J. Ford. I have confidence in not only their abilities but also their sincere desire to bring relief to those who are homeless, discouraged, and despondent. They will keep me apprised of all operations, and I will be actively involved in execution of our plans.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND CLARITY

During this collaborative execution, we will reap the benefits of the best of the sacred and secular worlds. The 9th District of the AME Church is partnering with two phenomenal social services agencies -- Mission Birmingham and the American Red Cross. We want to emphasize that our plans do not span a few weeks or a few months; we intend to remain engaged for the long haul, realizing that recovery and healing from devastation of this magnitude will take time.

INITIATION OF PLANS

In response to the widespread devastation as a result of recent storms in Alabama, the 9th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is pleased to announce that we will establish and operate five Relief Centers or **CENTERS OF HOPE**. Four centers will be located in the Birmingham, Alabama area, and one will be located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The **Centers of Hope** will provide hot meals, food boxes, toiletries, clothing assistance, transportation services and other support for immediate and evolving needs; as well as provide information to assist displaced persons in completing FEMA forms, insurance claims, and other documents. The 9th Episcopal District will work in partnership with Mission

Birmingham, The American Red Cross, and other social agencies to provide a coordinated effort to assist those in need. The Centers of Hope will be located in the following churches:

- 1) St. James AME Church, 529 5th Way Birmingham, AL 35214 – Rev. Johnnie L. Edison Sr.
- 2) Lee Chapel AME Church – 4005 Lee Chapel Dr., Birmingham, AL 35224 – Rev. Gregory McLeod
- 3) Bethel AME Church, Dolomite – 1225 Alexander St., Birmingham, AL 35061 – Rev. Levi Billups
- 4) Bethel AME Church, Ensley – 1524 Ave D, Birmingham, AL 35218 – Rev. Gloria Hall
- 5) St. Mark AME Church, 2715 18th Street, Tuscaloosa, AL 35204 – Rev. Leodis Strong

We are not insensitive to the pain experienced in other parts of the state and country. As soon as practical we will expand our sphere of support and assistance into other regions beyond the Birmingham and Tuscaloosa areas. At this point, we must place our focus on areas hardest hit in the immediate geographical zones; however, we will make maximum use of our resources to assist as many persons as possible regardless of their location.

Rather than rush in with temporary fixes, we want to rush to insure that our plans are solid and will have the greatest likelihood of enduring the many challenges that lie ahead.

It is imperative that everyone who has a zeal to help will be patient as we mobilize and take full advantage of all the valuable skills, abilities and experience that God is providing for this great work. Visualize yourself in this long term process as it unfolds. There is a place for everyone in this collaborative, corporate mission, making it stronger than all of our well meaning individual efforts. **I realize that Ninth District members are eager to help, and I applaud their generous spirit. However, I must emphasize the critical need for leaders and members of Alabama AME Churches to follow the Ninth Episcopal District's lead on this initiative. Knowing that individuals will help via other channels as they feel led, I call each Presiding Elder, Pastor and Component Leader to encourage your entire team to follow leadership and assist in executing the Episcopal District's Formal Plan of Action, including the list of ways to help included in this document.** All 300 congregations will continuously be notified of your participation in our plan of action. Let us go into the valleys together, synchronized, and expecting to be successful as we move forward with relief to those in need.

Operational start date is projected for May 14, 2011. Community notifications will be made by Ninth District Headquarters staff via press releases. We will distribute fliers in the community, to Red Cross, FEMA, Mission Birmingham, etc. as required.

For more information, please contact the 9th Episcopal District Office at 205.326.4499.

It should be understood that every phase is led by prayer and a belief that God will make all things right through the hands of the faithful!

9th Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Disaster Relief Plan of Action

James L. Davis, Servant Bishop
May 4, 2011

The Plan to Meet the Immediate Need

PHASE 1

1. Relief Centers are located near the areas of devastation. They will provide food, clothing, transportation, assessment of emergency needs, and information to persons affected by the storms. **Operational start date is projected for May 14, 2011** with hours of operation from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. daily. Churches that will serve as Centers of Hope are:

- 1) St. James AME Church, 529 5th Way Birmingham, AL 35214 – Rev. Johnnie L. Edison Sr.
- 2) Lee Chapel AME Church – 4005 Lee Chapel Dr., Birmingham, AL 35224 – Rev. Gregory McLeod
- 3) Bethel AME Church, Dolomite – 1225 Alexander St., Birmingham, AL 35061 – Rev. Levi Billups
- 4) Bethel AME Church, Ensley – 1524 Ave D, Birmingham, AL 35218 – Rev. Gloria Hall
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2. Immediate Actions

- **Assess Needs** of Individuals in the areas surrounding the Centers of Hope. The Connectional Church is standing by to help us. We must be ready to receive that help. It is our intent that each Center will be stocked and staffed to attend to the special needs of the areas it will support.
- **Identify** those AME members whose homes have been completely destroyed. We will help them first financially; then we will assist those whose homes were damaged but not destroyed. Our planned assistance will go only as far as our resources, and pastors will be asked to verify the extent of loss.
- **Prayerfully seek out a Coordinator** who will be assigned to each Center. This person will assist the pastors. This is a critical piece.
- **Recruit Committed Volunteers** from within the surrounding local churches. This is an area where everyone can pitch in. Disseminate requests for volunteers to all churches for van drivers, relief center volunteers, clean-up crews, and persons with construction skills. The main requirement for volunteering is long-term commitment.

Many hands will make the work light, and no one will have to carry a heavy load. The Ninth District Disaster Relief Coordinators will train Relief Center coordinators.

- **Develop tentative schedules** of operation for the center and establish work schedules for volunteers. When fully operational, Centers of Hope will provide two meals per day, with food provided by area churches.
3. Pastors and other leaders must be mindful that this is a **concerted effort**, and that there is a reason that God saw fit to leave our church houses virtually unaffected. We can be a blessing and receive a blessing in the midst of this catastrophe. Your enthusiasm and zeal are appreciated, but we must proceed with deliberate precision so that we can complete this marathon; for this will not be a brief sprint.

PHASE 2

We will mobilize and begin collecting the following items, which will be stored in the warehouses of our partner, Mission Birmingham. As needs are assessed, these items will be moved to the Centers, tailored to that area's requirements. Those who desire can begin purchasing these items and have them available when we are ready to proceed with this phase.

SUPPLIES:

- ANTIBIOTIC CREAM
- ANTISEPTIC WIPES
- ASPIRIN
- BANDAGES
- BLANKETS
- CANDLES
- COMBS/BRUSHES
- DEODORANT
- DIAPERS
- FLASHLIGHTS
- HAND SANITIZER
- LAUNDRY DETERGENT
- LOTION
- MEDICAL TAPE
- SHAMPOO
- SANITARY NAPKINS
- SLEEPERS
- SOAP
- STERILE GAUZE
- TOOTHBRUSHES
- TOOTHPASTE
- TOWELS
- TYLENOL
- WATER
- WET NAPS

SERVICES/SUPPORT:

- PROVIDE A HOT MEAL TO ONE OF THE CENTERS
- Gift cards to Wal-Mart or generic cash cards
- Give monetary donations: MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: 9th Episcopal District Disaster Relief Fund and mail to the 9th Episcopal District AME Church, P. O. Box 11705, Birmingham, AL 35202.

PHASE 3

United Efforts

1. Over the course of this recovery period, we will schedule from 5 to 7 **Cleanup Campaigns** in the disaster areas. The 9th Episcopal District welcomes our Connectional AME Church brothers and sisters and those in the community to join us as we roll up our sleeves and do what needs to be done. The Ninth District will provide clean-up crews to the American Red Cross, Mission Birmingham, and our other partners to assist with clean-up in areas of devastation. Dates and other details TBA.
2. As we progress, we will continue collecting needed **supplies** upon the request of social service partners, Mission Birmingham and American Red Cross. Because of the vast experience of Mission Birmingham and the phenomenal Global Impact of the American Red Cross, their resources and knowledge will be invaluable to us. Remember that this is for the long haul.
3. We will coordinate our efforts with Mission Birmingham, the Red Cross, FEMA, Mayor's task force and the Neighborhood Associates.

It should be understood that every phase is led by prayer and a belief that God will make all things right through the hands of the faithful!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

How can I help?

1. You may collect needed items as listed and have them sent to our warehouse located at Christian Service Mission, 3600 3rd Avenue, South, Birmingham, AL 35222 or to either of the Centers of Hope. Please make the district office aware of your intent and shipping date so that all necessary preparations are made to receive your items and divided amongst all of our centers.
2. Gift Cards are essential. The persons we are seeking to help in most instances have no permanent place at this time to prepare a meal. Therefore, we are not receiving any can goods or foods for distribution at this time. Gift Cards and all financial assistance should be mailed to the 9th Episcopal District AME Church Headquarters, c/o 9th District Disaster Relief Fund, P. O. Box 11705, Birmingham, AL 35202. Your gifts will be acknowledged and a report of its usage will be sent in a timely manner.
3. You may volunteer at any one of the Centers of Hope
 - a. Helping to prepare meals
 - b. Distributing our resources
 - c. Being available to drive others to the doctors, pharmacy, insurance company, etc.
4. Churches, Organizations, Fraternities, Sororities may choose one day to assume the responsibility of providing and serving a meal at one of the centers. If that is your desire, you may register your desire to the 9th District Office via email – jld123bishop@yahoo.com and it will be forwarded to the committee and they will coordinate it in the schedule.
5. Volunteering to serve on the cleanup campaign is not available at this time; we are awaiting clearance through the American Red Cross. The dates for this opportunity will be posted on our website www.ninthamec.org should you or your organization choose to serve in this capacity.

More information is forthcoming as we proceed in the disaster relief. All questions may be directed to the 9th District Office at 205.326.4499 and they will be forwarded to the committee.

Let's remember that our brothers and sisters need as much help during these challenging times as we can provide. If you want to make a difference, email us at jld123bishop@yahoo.com or call us at 205.326.4499.

VOLUNTEER FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

BEST CONTACT NUMBER: _____

PLEASE CHECK YOUR AREA OF INTEREST:

Relief Center Coordinator _____

Receiving and Distribution Center _____

Relief Center Volunteer _____

Clean-up crew _____

Clerical Support _____

SELECT FIRST AND SECOND CHOICE FOR RELIEF CENTER VOLUNTEER DUTY:

- 1) St. James AME Church, 529 5th Way Birmingham, AL 35214 – Rev. Johnnie L. Edison Sr.
- 2) Lee Chapel AME Church – 4005 Lee Chapel Dr., Birmingham, AL 35224 – Rev. Gregory McLeod
- 3) Bethel AME Church, Dolomite – 1225 Alexander St., Birmingham, AL 35061 – Rev. Levi Billups
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Forms should be returned to the 9th Episcopal District AME Church, P. O. Box 11705, Birmingham, AL 35202 or via email at jld123bishop@yahoo.com

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