



Dear Friends in Christ,

On September 1-2, 2021, Hurricane Ida imparted a wrath upon Atlantic Coastal cities, leaving 55 dead, countless injured and **over \$75 billion worth of damage** across eight states, including New Jersey.

Greater New Jersey's Disaster Response Team has been diligently praying, organizing, collecting essentials, delivering supplies, and working tirelessly at sites of devastation caused by Hurricane Ida. The hardest part of this work is not the manual labor and it's not even the heart wrenching testimonies of every survivor heard by our team at every interaction. The state of New Jersey has been extremely slow in making progress to provide funds, information, and case management for those affected. Many anticipate that construction will not begin until September, one full year after the storm. GNJ, through its strong teams and funds raised, is making progress already and will begin working on homes in August; we will be some of the first to help families and communities rebuild.

In addition to beginning to rebuild, GNJ has awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants to local congregations affected by Ida. Our work is only able to extend as far as the funds needed to provide relief. Those still being impacted by Ida are in constant, immediate need of food, clothing, personal hygiene products, lodging, and transportation. In the long term, our team is seeking to raise funds, providing ability to purchase the necessary supplies and tools that will assist in rebuilding communities, stores, churches, and homes.

Our goal is to rebuild 50 houses, with a team of 500 volunteers. **We are continuously working to meet the needs of those devastated by Hurricane Ida, but we can't do it alone.** Please take an offering in your church and present it for the 2022 Annual Conference Session. To present your offering, please visit www.gnjumc.org/2022-annual-conference/hurricane-ida-relief-offering/.

Your ministry is a blessing in your local church and beyond. Together, our connection and generosity will make a difference for families in affected communities throughout GNJ.

Keep the faith!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'John R. Schol'.

John R. Schol, Bishop
United Methodists of Greater New Jersey