

# The Call

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HOLSTON CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## Holston members join massive hurricane-relief effort

By Annette Bender

When the Rev. Curtis Grissett told his congregation how to help victims of Hurricane Charley with money, he expected that perhaps \$200 would be raised.

Later that day, the treasurer of Hartman's Chapel United Methodist Church

called Grissett to say the congregation had voted to give \$1,000 to hurricane victims.

"All I can say is that it humbles me," said Grissett, pastor of the Morristown District church averaging 75 in worship attendance. "This is a very generous, caring, compassionate congregation. Most are retired farmers, just plain folks."

Hartman's Chapel is one of a handful

of Holston congregations stepping out to aid Floridians following a devastating hurricane earlier this month.

Described by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) as the worst storm to hit western Florida in 100 years, Hurricane Charley struck Aug. 13 before surging up the East Coast to the Carolinas and Virginia. The hurricane, with sustained winds of 131 mph to 155 mph, was responsible for at least 20 deaths and billions of dollars in damage to Florida alone.

Anticipating Hurricane Charley's arrival, UMCOR had shipped all available flood buckets to Florida from its Sager Brown Depot in Louisiana. At press time, UMCOR officials were in Florida, deciding on a strategy for the agency's denomination-wide response.

In the meantime, Holston leaders geared up to do their part. Dwight Barker, Holston's disaster-relief coordinator for the northern region, is currently assembling a volunteer team that will eventually travel to Florida. On Aug. 18, Barker said that only one person had volunteered. But there's

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ARCADIA, Fla. — Trinity United Methodist Church was just one of the many buildings and homes damaged during Hurricane Charley. Arcadia is 20 to 30 miles from Port Charlotte, where the hurricane made landfall.



UMNS photo by the Rev. Larry Rankin

### Hurricane help

☛ **Join Holston's volunteer team.** Contact Dwight Barker at [barker42rd@comcast.net](mailto:barker42rd@comcast.net) or (276) 356-2847.

☛ **Give money.** Make checks to your local church, designating "UMCOR/Hurricane Charley" on the memo line. To make credit-card donations, call UMCOR directly at 1-800-554-8583.

☛ **Collect supplies.** Cherokee UMC, in Johnson City District, has rented a tractor-trailer truck to take nonperishable foods, water, flashlights, tarpaulins and other supplies to Florida. To participate, contact (423) 926-0978 or [woody@cherokeechurch.com](mailto:woody@cherokeechurch.com).

### Was the SEJ election racist? Readers respond to article

By Annette Bender

Members of Holston's delegation have signed a response to a United Methodist News Service feature published on the front page of the Aug. 13 edition of *The Call*.

The article alleged racism in the Southeastern Jurisdictional bishop elections, while Holston delegates expressed dismay at perceptions that decisions were made "on any basis

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other than who would bring capable spiritual and temporal leadership to a conference."

*The Call* also received seven other messages from readers responding to the article, including three from Holston delegates.

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### Inside



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*The Call* welcomes Bishop James Swanson with a new column, "Wings."

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A Cleveland District church hosts a prayer service for U.S. Marines bound for Iraq.

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### Rodney's Story

Country singer Rodney Atkins is a former child of Holston Home.

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