

Summary Report from the Gulf Coast Relief Funding Panel

Conference Call

September 13, 2005

Present: Eunice Benton, Rev. Steve J. Crump, Dr. Rebecca Cureau, Atema Eclai, Rev. Anne Odin Heller, Rev. Jacqueline Luck, Rev. Meg Riley

1. Fundraising:

The Panel celebrated the newest figures for the Gulf Coast Relief Fund, which exceeded \$850,000 at the time of our conversation. We were in awe to learn that one donor had anonymously contributed \$100,000, and know that many congregations are raising funds for both the UUA-UUSC Fund and relief efforts in their local communities.

2. Partnerships:

The Panel learned about a series of "managing partnerships" that have developed between Gulf Coast Congregations and other congregations.

3. Reports:

Panel members discussed their current individual support efforts and offered reports from area where they are located or had visited. Many stories of sorrow, joy, grief, relief, anger, and more were shared. Work being done in congregations of all sizes to provide assistance was commended.

4. The Panel discussed immediate needs.

Especially given FEMA's absence, we agreed that it was imperative to get some money on the ground quickly for immediate needs without red tape. The Panel voted to authorize grants of \$25,000 to each of the three affected New Orleans congregations, along with an additional \$25,000 to be divided among the smaller Mississippi congregations. The grants will go to the [North Shore UUs](#), [Community Church UU of New Orleans](#), [First UU Church of New Orleans](#), and [the Mid-South District](#), to be divided among the Katrina-affected smaller Mississippi and Alabama congregations. Each recipient will set up an advisory panel to oversee the distribution of these funds. Monies may go for immediate needs of the congregations and its members, or the broader community, as each panel decides.

In making these grants, we were all steadfast in the commitment that the significant portion of the funds raised go to serve the most marginalized and un-served people in the affected areas. We are grateful that the funds, supplemented by donations from congregations and other UU sources, appear sufficient for this to be done.

5. The next conference call of the Gulf Coast Relief Funding Panel will be September 20-21 in person in Baton Rouge, LA.