

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

The images of the despair and destruction in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti continue to overwhelm us, but they also call forth our response of prayer and generosity.

Paul's letter to the Romans gives us words of comfort and hope. Paul writes:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:22-27).

Thank you for continuing to hold in prayer the people in Haiti and all those who are working to bring relief. Thank you for your generous financial gifts.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is already working through long-standing partnerships with The Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran World Relief to provide emergency food, water, shelter and medical supplies.

This church is uniquely positioned to provide immediate and ongoing help. The ELCA has committed an initial \$250,000 from ELCA International Disaster Response, and we've authorized an additional \$500,000 as congregations respond both to the immediate needs and long-term rebuilding efforts.

For those of you who would like to support these relief efforts, I encourage you to visit [this Web page](http://www.elca.org/haitiearthquake) (www.elca.org/haitiearthquake) or call 800-638-3522.

Our phones are open the entire Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST. **One hundred percent** of all gifts made to ELCA Disaster Response, designated for Haiti Earthquake Relief, will be used for immediate relief and ongoing recovery.

This is what it means to be the church together in mission for the sake of the world.

I invite you to pray:

Merciful God, hear our cry for mercy in the wake of the earthquake. Reveal your presence in the midst of our suffering. Help us to trust in your promises of hope and life so that desperation and grief will not overtake us. Come quickly to our aid that we may know peace and joy again. Strengthen us in this time of trial with the assurance of hope we know in the death and resurrection of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

In God's grace,



The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
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