



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

POST OFFICE BOX 5606  
10330 STAPLES MILL ROAD

GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA 23058-5606

**SHARMA D. LEWIS**  
RESIDENT BISHOP

October 25, 2016

TELEPHONE: 804/521-1102  
FAX: 804/521-1178  
E-MAIL: [terribiggins@vaumc.org](mailto:terribiggins@vaumc.org)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Although I have been serving as your bishop for less than two months I have observed immediately the love and compassion that is deeply grounded in God's people known as the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. I knew before I arrived that you were involved in a long term recovery effort after the tornadoes that struck across the state in the spring. I also became quickly aware that Virginia is known for its well organized and efficient disaster response team.

It didn't take long after my arrival to experience firsthand the compassionate response of the Virginia Conference Disaster Response Team (ERT). Hurricane Matthew struck several southeastern states and while other neighbors experienced more devastation from the storm than Virginia, coastal flooding has created a crisis for many families in the Hampton Roads area and more than 2,300 homes were damaged by the storm primarily from flooding.

Our conference emergency response team members have already been working for more than a week helping mop up, clean up, and dry out homes. Following their work Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) teams will also be required to help with home repair for the affected families.

I invite you to first hold these families in your prayers as their lives have been disrupted and in some cases displaced by the effects of the storm.

Second, I am asking you to consider making a donation to the Virginia Conference Disaster Response Advance Special #5037. Your gift will help provide needed personnel, required equipment, and a faithful Christian witness not only for this current disaster, but also for disasters that may occur in the future.

You can make a gift through your local church. Or, send a check payable to "Virginia United Methodist Conference" to the Virginia Conference Treasurer, P.O. Box 5605, Glen Allen, VA 23058. Designate "Conference Advance #5037 – Disaster Response" on your check or apportionment statement.

Your sister in Christ,

Sharma D. Lewis  
Resident Bishop