

Holston Presbytery Disaster Response Team Update January 2025

Dear Holston Family,

Your Presbytery Disaster Response Team (DRT) has been working hard over the last few months to track recovery efforts in our area to help you contribute where you are interested and able.

Grants: In December the DRT approved a grant for a flood survivor who is rebuilding his house and did not qualify for much government aid. Cedar Creek PC generously contributed and the Disaster Response Team also gave \$7,500 from your donations that have come from offerings and through the Holston Presbytery website. Thank you Cedar Creek Presbyterian for your continuing hard work addressing needs in Greene County.

At the moment we have around \$30,000 in grant funds and we would very much like to put that money to work. So, if your church is aware of a particular need, please go to the Presbytery website and click the “Recovery Grant” button – www.holstonpresbytery.net. Download and fill out the application and return it to us. We will quickly review the application to see how it meets our criteria for local recovery and contribute as generously as we can. We are depending congregations to identify projects that will help folks in need and manage the distribution of funds.

Host Sites: A second thank you to Cedar Creek and Newport Presbyterian Churches who continue to offer space for work groups to come and stay while helping flood survivors. If you, or some other group you are aware of, wants to arrange a work trip and needs a place to stay, please contact:

- Harrell Cobb, Co-Pastor, Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church, 423-329-8310, hlcobb@hotmail.com
- Jimmy Robertson, Elder, Newport Presbyterian Church, 423-608-1028, jrobertson111.jr@gmail.com

CarePortal: Finally, the DRT has been in conversation with local users of CarePortal. CarePortal.org is a web service – “portal” – where individuals, churches and support organization can list individuals’ needs and quickly get help from people and organizations who want to give. A nationwide, faith-based non-profit whose original focus was helping children in the foster care system, CarePortal also now has disaster response/recovery management capabilities.

Rachel Lawson, from Waverly Road PC in Kingsport and Director of SMILE Foster Closet, is CarePortal’s Regional Manager. She has educated the DRT about how CarePortal can help us coordinate responses to the specific needs of recovering families. We believe the platform is an excellent way for congregations to share information about the specific, immediate needs they have identified and to quickly have those needs met. Rachel will be at the next Presbytery meeting with more information about CarePortal’s capabilities. Stay tuned for developments.

Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) are standing up in each county to coordinate the fund raising and recovery work of churches, non-profit agencies and local governments. This will help clarify what support is needed and organize specific construction and other recovery projects. We will let you know how you can plug into these efforts as the situation develops.

Keep in Touch: If you are working on projects with response organizations like Holsten Habitat, Appalachian Service Project (ASP), Volunteer United, RISE Erwin, or your county’s LTRG, please let us know about it so we can support you and spread the word. And again, if you know of specific needs for funds, send in the form on the Presbytery’s website.

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