

Session 2:

The Flood of 2021

On June 25, 2021, the residents of Detroit went to bed like any other night. The next morning, thousands of people awoke to discover their basements had flooded with up to 8 feet of stormwater and sewage. Furniture was destroyed. Washers and dryers were overturned. Family heirlooms had been ruined. Lives were disrupted as people were forced to move out of homes until they could be decontaminated - a process that took months for some residents. Across the country, United Methodists began to wonder: What could we do to help Detroiters rebuild their lives?



LIVES MUST BE REBUILT

The rebuilding of lives after a disaster is a central theme in the story of Noah. In fact, the ark itself is a symbol of God's desire for lives to be rebuilt once the flood subsides.

Read Genesis 6:13-22

BIBLE NOTE:

The word "ark" is not a common word for a boat. Beyond the story of Noah, the word is only used in one other story throughout the entire Bible. The other reference is also to a boat that was used to preserve life: the basket Moses gets placed in to save his life from Pharaoh.

Discuss

- Why does God try to preserve human life in the story of Noah?
- Do you believe God wants people to rebuild their lives after disasters today?
- Noah's role in rebuilding lives was to build the ark, then gather both people and animals onto it. What is our role in rebuilding lives after disasters?



What is our role?

The United Methodist Church has a global reputation for helping people rebuild their lives after disasters. From Early Response Teams to Volunteers in Mission, United Methodist volunteers are often the first to a disaster scene and the last to leave, and witness firsthand the damage caused by events such as floods.

- **Read** the following excerpt from the United Methodist Social Principles, paragraph 160, on Global Climate Stewardship:
 - "The United Methodist Church acknowledges that 'Greenhouse gas' emissions threaten to alter dramatically the earth's climate for generations to come with severe environmental, economic, and social implications."
- **Watch** *The Flood of 2021*.
 - In Detroit, what impact did the flood of 2021 have on the environment? On the personal finances of homeowners? On the community?
- **Discuss**
 - What are some of the environmental, economic, and social implications of the increasing number of disasters being caused by climate change?

A different perspective...

It is one thing to hear about a disaster like a flood on the news—it is another thing to witness the devastation caused by floods firsthand. In Detroit, we followed a United Methodist Early Response Team on its mission to “muck out” basements following the Flood of 2021.

>> **Watch** *Early Response Team*

Discuss

- Why do you think it is important for Christians to help people rebuild their lives after a disaster?

An aerial photograph of a city skyline, likely Detroit, Michigan, featuring several prominent skyscrapers and a dense urban landscape. The sky is overcast with light clouds. Three circular text overlays are positioned over the image: a dark blue circle in the upper left, a teal circle in the middle right, and a dark brown circle in the lower left. The text in each circle asks questions related to flood damage and climate change.

HAVE YOU EVER
EXPERIENCED THE
DAMAGE CAUSED BY A
FLOOD?

HOW DO CLIMATE
DISASTERS IMPACT
THE ENVIRONMENT?
PERSONAL FINANCES?
COMMUNITIES?

WHAT CAN YOU DO
TO HELP PEOPLE
REBUILD THEIR LIVES
AFTER EVENTS LIKE
FLOODS?



Did You Know?

The United Methodist Church deploys hundreds of ERT and VIM long-term recovery teams each year.

Learn More...

- Read all of Genesis 6:1 - 7:24 to gain more context for the story.
- Learn about a local Detroit organization doing disaster response work in Jefferson-Chalmers area: www.d4drg.org
- Check out the Early Response Team (www.westohioumc.org/ERT) and Volunteers in Mission (www.westohioumc.org/VIM) web pages on the West Ohio website.
 - Are you interested in being trained as an ERT or VIM Team Leader? If so, contact mgrace@wocumc.org.



Footprint Fact

In 2021, climate-related disasters caused over \$145 billion of damage.

