

Session 3:

A Flood of Aging Infrastructure

When you visit a city after a flood, you notice the signs of life: standing on rain-soaked streets that have since turned dry; volunteer teams cleaning out basements; piles of trash by the side of the road waiting to be collected while people make small steps to move forward and rebuild their lives. There is a peculiar calm - a stillness to the air in a place where disaster has come and gone. You look around and wonder: What are the signs that life is beginning to return to “normal?”



FINDING SIGNS OF LIFE

There may be no such thing as a return to “normal” life after an event like the flood described in the Bible. Nevertheless, there are signs of life described in the story.

Read Genesis 8:1-12

BIBLE NOTE:

In Genesis 8:1, the reference to God making the wind blow echoes Genesis 1:2. Just as God created the world at the beginning of all things, God is working to re-create the world after the cataclysmic flood.



Did You Know?

A single tree can absorb 500 to 1,000 gallons of stormwater each year.

Discuss

- What are the signs that life is returning to the world?
- What does the branch from the olive tree mean?
- Do you believe God helps re-create life following disasters?



Who is impacted most?

In the story of Noah, most of humankind is equally affected by the flood. But today, floods frequently impact different people in very different ways. Specifically, people who live in poverty are more likely to have their lives disrupted by disasters than people who are wealthy.

- **Read** the following excerpt from the United Methodist Social Principles, paragraph 160, on Global Climate Stewardship:
 - “The adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions.”
- **Watch** *A Flood of Aging Infrastructure*.
 - How do climate disasters compound the challenges for people who live in poorer areas with less money to update stormwater infrastructure?
- **Discuss**
 - Is it fair that people who are wealthy experience the floods of climate change differently than people who live in poverty?

Footprint Fact: The U.S. accounts for 14% of global carbon emissions but less than 5% of the world’s population.



Planting hope...

In Detroit, the stormwater infrastructure for many suburbs withstood the flood of 2021. However, in the city’s historic Jefferson Chalmers District - an area of Detroit that has highly concentrated poverty - an electric pump failed, which contributed to the severity of the disaster. We visited Jefferson Chalmers to help with a volunteer tree planting day, and witnessed how trees have become a sign of life returning to Detroit.

>> **Watch** *Greening of Detroit*

Discuss

- How does green infrastructure use natural systems to help life return to “normal” in urban areas?



Learn More...

- Read all of Genesis 8:1-19 to gain more context for the story.
- Discover more about the Greening of Detroit at www.greeningofdetroit.com
- Check out the Paper section from *A Non-Expert's Guide to Living More Sustainably* to get ideas about practical ways to protect trees and make the world a greener place.
 - What is one change you would be willing to make in your personal life? In your church? In your community? Are there any other ideas you would add?

Consider this...

- Have you ever traveled to the site of a flood or disaster? What signs of new life did you see?
- Is it fair for nations and individuals who are wealthy to overuse fossil fuels when their effects are most felt by people and nations that live in poverty?
- Who should pay for the damage caused by climate-driven disasters?
 - The nations who create the most greenhouse gases?
 - The fossil fuel companies who profit from the creation of greenhouse gases?
 - The people who use greenhouse gases?
 - The people whose homes get destroyed by climate change?
 - Why?