

Dear Friends, Family, and Colleagues:

A collaborative of churches in Los Angeles are engaging in a long-term relationship with the Bethany UMC in New Orleans to provide time, treasure, and talent to the rebuilding of a neighborhood of 1000 homes in the devastated Gulf Coast.

Bethany, a church of 800 members, was flooded for three weeks. 90% of the congregation lost their homes and all of their belongings in the flood. Bethany has long been an important community source of leadership and activism. They have re-opened the church while under construction and are eager to restart their major health and education programs that are even more in need now that city health and education services have been destroyed. Bethany is one of only two churches in the Ponchartrain Park/Gentilly area that is currently rebuilding. By October, 2006, Bethany UMC will again become a locus of organization and community activity -- a clearinghouse to coordinate neighborhood rebuilding efforts and the spiritual center it has been for half a century. New Orleans needs this resource.



Our first and second work teams are back from New Orleans, having completed repair and landscape projects that made Bethany an oasis of green in a desert of dead landscape. Reconstruction of the sanctuary and education building will be complete by October 30. The second work team, a youth dominated group returned in July, and a third team departs October 15.

FUMC Santa Monica is proceeding on the premise that "many hands make for light work." We have asked four other L.A. area churches to collaborate with us. We are asking all of our friends to support this effort. We have

reached out to corporations to assist in re-launching Bethany's Health Project and we are asking church congregations around the country to make a gift to the purchase of furnishings for the rebuilt sanctuary and education building. FUMC Santa Monica has raised over \$100,000 toward storm recovery during this first year of work.

Here's how you can help in this revitalization of a New Orleans neighborhood:

1. Send a generous, tax-deductible contribution to the First United Methodist Church of Santa Monica. On the memo line, please write Gulf Coast Work Team (or GCWT). Give us your address -- and an email, too, if you please -- so we can send our thanks and a receipt, as well as reconstruction photos and progress updates.

2. Please mail or email this letter to everyone on your personal, business and family email lists, saying, "Here's an exemplary project to which I'm donating. I hope you'll consider

giving it your support as well." Our goal is to encourage 300 people to send this appeal to between 50 and 100 of their friends, colleagues and relatives.

3. Please think with us: Whom do you know who could make a major donation to this partnership and community revitalization effort? One person, a family foundation, one service organization or corporate gift could produce what would otherwise take us weeks of fund-raising. We have team members who can make presentations to these entities.

4. Please join us on a work team, a project committee, or a fund raising effort.

Our team members cover virtually all of their own expenses so your donation is used entirely to support the project. Each project week costs about \$20,000 in materials and local labor which we are supporting.

Questions about participating on a work team, helping with a project, and confidential offers of financial help may be directed to:

The Rev. Larry Young, Associate Pastor

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For more photos and information on the project visit our websites.

www.santamonicaumc.org

www.friendsofbethany.org