

# Baptists Mobilize to Help Victims of Hurricane Irma

Baptist groups are preparing to mobilize to help victims of Hurricane Irma, even as efforts to assist folks recovering from Hurricane Harvey continue.

As with [Hurricane Harvey recovery initiatives](#), much of the Baptist relief efforts related to Hurricane Irma will begin following the immediate work of first responders.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship [announced on Sept. 8](#) that it is preparing relief plans by reaching out to “partners in Puerto Rico, Haiti, Bahamas, Cuba and Florida” to determine the most helpful ways to respond.

“In keeping with CBF’s focus on long-term impact, CBF Disaster Response participates in networks seeking to help communities after a devastating event,” the press release explained, “but employs most of its resources on the long-term recovery, rehabilitation and resiliency of a community after first-responders have finished their work.”

Later that day, CBF [highlighted partnerships in Texas](#) that are enabling its disaster response team to offer more effective Hurricane Harvey relief efforts not only in Houston but also other areas in Texas and Louisiana.

CBF Florida closed its offices on Sept. 8 to allow staff to prepare their homes for Irma’s arrival.

In a [Sept. 6 email to constituents](#), it emphasized that the organization’s recovery work would begin “once safety officials have cleared families and businesses to return to their communities.”

The Baptist World Alliance [issued several special appeals](#) in recent weeks to help address flooding not only in the U.S. but also in western Africa and southern Asia.

American Baptist Churches, USA, [urged on Sept. 8](#) prayer for those who had been and would be impacted by Irma, along with requesting donations to help those in need.

An estimated 1 million people in Puerto Rico were without power due to the storm, ABC-USA reported.

One of its partner organizations in Caguas “prepared and distributed kits of drinking water, precooked meals, clothes, insect repellent, rain capes, basic articles and information about shelters” prior to the storm’s arrival and is focused on helping the homeless population in the storm’s wake.

The Baptist General Association of Virginia [posted on Sept. 7](#) an update about their Hurricane Harvey relief efforts, along with a notice that it was monitoring Hurricane Irma and formulating plans to help victims. A [video update](#) was published the next day.

Like most congregations in Hurricane Irma’s path, First Baptist Church of Vero Beach, Florida, pastored by EthicsDaily.com contributor Joe LaGuardia, did not hold services on Sept. 10.

The church is eager to engage its community’s needs, [posting Monday morning on its Facebook page](#): “Church is safe and sound, so let’s focus on helping others next two days and have a clean up day on Wednesday.”

At least seven Baptist churches in northern Florida and southern Georgia opened their doors to evacuees, [according to WCTV](#), a CBS affiliate in Tallahassee, Florida.

Baptist congregations throughout the state are [listed as official shelters on FloridaDisaster.gov](#), the website of the state’s Division of Emergency Management.

Many other Baptist groups - including local churches, state groups from the Carolinas to Kentucky and beyond, and other national bodies like the Southern

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Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board - have urged constituents to pray for those impacted by Irma and to help by volunteering and donating funds.