

Youth Delegates' Message

A message from the Rio Texas Conference Youth Delegates:

We are heartbroken by the devastation left in the wake of the floods from the Guadalupe River. Lives have been lost, families are grieving, homes have been destroyed, and entire communities turned upside down. We mourn those who have tragically lost their lives, and we stand with the families of the missing, holding hope as they face the unimaginable. In this time of pain we stand together with every person who has been affected. Mark 12:31 states "Love your neighbor as yourself". So in this time of uncertainty we must help those who have been affected as you would hope others do for you. We also must remember to care for ourselves because self-care is equally as important. Though the path ahead is uncertain we are committed to rising above these waters together. Though we face an immense tragedy we are reminded that even in the darkest times God's grace provides the strength to endure. With his guidance we will rebuild what has been lost and find peace in the promise of renewal. Let us trust in his power to heal our hearts and restore our communities. So from our youth to your youth give yourself some grace in these trying times and remember that God is always in your corner.

Worship Resources



Worship Resources, Litanies, and Prayers

Litany of Lament, Hope, and Strength **Rev. Dr. Aaron Gonzalez, Rio Texas Conference**

Leader: God of the hills and valleys, the rivers and plains, today we come before You with heavy hearts.

People: You are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.

Leader: For the rain that has overwhelmed the land, for the rivers that have risen beyond their banks, we grieve.

People: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: For homes destroyed, for lives and livelihoods lost, for communities uprooted, we weep.

People: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: For families displaced, for those searching for loved ones, for those waiting for news, we lift our voices.

People: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: For first responders, neighbors, and volunteers offering help and shelter, we give thanks.

People: Lord, make them instruments of Your peace.

Leader: For those who are afraid, for those who feel abandoned, for those overwhelmed by loss, we pray for comfort.

People: Lord, wrap them in Your everlasting arms.



Leader: Even as the waters rise, we remember: You are the God who walked on water, who calmed the storm, who parted the sea.

People: You are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.

Leader: In the face of destruction, we will not lose hope. In the face of uncertainty, we will cling to Your promises.

People: For You, O Lord, are faithful. Your love endures forever.

Communal Prayer

Rev. Dr. Aaron Gonzalez, Rio Texas Conference

All Together:

God of mercy and might,

We lift before You the people of the Hill Country,

Those along the Guadalupe River and beyond

Who face loss, fear, and uncertainty this day.

Let Your peace flow like a gentle stream into every weary heart.

Strengthen those who rescue and rebuild.

Provide shelter for the displaced, comfort for the grieving,

And hope for those overwhelmed by despair.

As floodwaters recede, may Your Spirit rise up among us—

A river of compassion, courage, and care.

In the days ahead, remind us that we are not alone.

You are with us, and we are called to be with one another.

In the name of Christ, our Rock and Redeemer, we pray.

Amen.



Call to a Special Offering (Advance #2050)

Rev. Dr. Tanya Campen, Rio Texas Conference Office

Leader:

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” — *Psalm 46:1*

Friends, as we gather in worship today, our hearts are heavy with the weight of recent floods—especially in the Hill Country and along the Guadalupe River. We grieve with those who have lost homes, livelihoods, and loved ones. And yet, even now, we hold fast to hope.

As people of faith, we know that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. We are also called to be God’s presence for one another—to offer comfort, to lend strength, to respond with compassion and care.

Today, we invite you to participate in a special offering to support flood relief efforts in the Rio Texas Conference. Your gifts will go to organizations and churches actively responding with food, shelter, rebuilding assistance, and hope.

As we give, let it be more than an offering—let it be an act of solidarity, a prayer in action, a river of compassion flowing from one heart to another.

[Offering followed by Doxology UMH #95]

Blessing of a Special Offering (Advance #2050)

Rev. Dr. Tanya Campen, Rio Texas Conference Office

Leader: Let us pray.

God of refuge and strength, we bring these gifts with open hands and hopeful hearts. Bless them. Multiply them. Use them to restore what has been lost, to comfort those in despair, to remind every person affected by this flood that they are not alone.

As these offerings go out into our conference, let them carry Your presence— steady, strong, and full of grace.

And may we, too, be a living offering- A people of refuge and strength for one another.

In the name of our Creator, Savior, and Sustainer, Amen.



Prayers

A Prayer for the Guadalupe River Communities

Rev. Adam Knapp, First United Methodist Church, San Marcos

Lord, we lift up to you all those in the path of flooding along the Guadalupe River in Central Texas. We pray for those who have lost property, stability, security, safety, and loved ones in this crisis. We pray for towns of Comfort, Hunt, Kerrville, Banderas, and many others who are experiencing devastation today. We pray for the children's camps along the river and the staff who are working to calm and protect many frightened campers.

We pray mostly for the poor and the vulnerable, those with no safety nets who are exposed to the full weight of this tragedy. We pray for those who feel helpless and those for whom helplessness is the struggle of daily life. We pray for the first responders and the churches who are serving as your hands and feet today.

We pray for the hearts of people to be turned to compassion to respond to this disaster. We pray for disaster response teams and organizations such as UMCOR who will labor in these towns alongside the victims to bring dignity and hope. We pray that in the midst of disaster we might see the dignity of all those in need and serve without restraint in the way you have shown us. We pray this in the name of the Eternal and Triune Lord. Amen.

A Prayer of Lament from the Hill Country

Rev. Thomas Hankins, Gaddis United Methodist Church, Comfort

God of all things,
God who holds us in loving embrace,
God who walks with us through the storms and heartbreaks of life;
God of all grief,
God of reunions.
God of safety,
God of loss.
God of pain.
God of the first rays of sunshine after darkness.
We need you now.

We are broken and heartbroken. We do not have the answers to our many questions. There is a heaviness in the very air we are breathing, and it feels difficult to even take a step forward.

Be with us in our grief. Our reunions. Be with us in our safety. Be with us in our loss. Bear our pain with us, for we cannot bear it on our own. Be with us in that first, tear filled glimpse of the Sun...whether that is today, or years from now.

Walk with us, Lord, as we walk with our neighbors and communities. Let us be Your light in the midst of darkness, and when we can't find the strength, shine in us nonetheless.

God, let Your peace be known to all those who bravely responded to this crisis. Let Your ceaseless love be felt by those who have lost property, beloved homes, and precious possessions.

But more than anything, Lord, be with our neighbors who have lost family members and loved ones. Be with the parents of lost children. And God, please, let Your closeness be known and felt by those children in the midst of their fear. Your heart is for them, Lord. It is for the helpless, the lost, and the scared. Wrap them in Your love, that they may know the peace that comes only from Your heart.

Please, God. We beg of You, let us know the reality of Your presence, here and now.

Amen.

A Prayer for the July 4 Flood

Rev. Teresa Welborn, University United Methodist Church, Austin

Once again, O God, our hearts are broken open.
Be with us as we watch news from the Texas Hill Country.
We feel helpless in the face of such devastation.
Flooding waters claim lives.
People are missing including over 20 children at summer camp.

In the horror of this moment we sit in silent shock
we weep
The sound of moaning escapes our mouths
we feel our chests tighten
we shake our fists at you.

Take these our offerings.
Though they are not useful,
they are a sign
of our care and compassion.

Mercy cries out
testifying that all who hurt are held
in Your own broken-open heart

calling us to be the helpers
begging us to never forget we belong to one another.
Amen.

A Prayer for the Guadalupe River Communities
Rev. Dan Harrington, Colonial Hills United Methodist Church, San Antonio

God of grace and peace,
We lift up the people of Kerrville.
Let your presence not just be near—but unmistakably felt.
In the ache, in the waiting, in the quiet—be there.
Strengthen those who are helping.
Steady those who are grieving.
And guide us, your church, to be a source of comfort and care.
In Christ's name,
Amen.

Additional Resources

Additional Resources

- [When the Wind Blows: Worship Resources for Use After Hurricanes or Other Natural Disasters](https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/when-the-wind-blows-worship-resources-for-use-after-hurricanes-or-other-nat)
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/when-the-wind-blows-worship-resources-for-use-after-hurricanes-or-other-nat>
- [God is with me: A guided workbook for children after experiencing a flood](https://simplebooklet.com/umcfloodbookletforchildren#page=1)
<https://simplebooklet.com/umcfloodbookletforchildren#page=1>
- [Out came the sun: Journeying with children in grief](https://riotexas.org/familyconversations/naturaldisaster)
- [Resources for Families during times of crisis, trauma, and disaster](https://riotexas.org/familyconversations/naturaldisaster)
<https://riotexas.org/familyconversations/naturaldisaster>
- [God With Us in the Flood: A Devotional Journal for Youth Processing the Flooding in Kerrville, Rev. Isabel Lopez](#)
- [Supporting Families as we Grieve Together \(Podcast\)](#)