Greetings to you in the name of Christ!

This week we have continued to see more and more news about the devastation following in Hurricane Harvey’s path. As we hear about the losses in both human life and in property, it can feel overwhelming. I know that I’m having a hard time continuing to keep up with the news simply because I often want to just avoid it. News of losses such as this weigh on us and stir up unquenchable empathy in us. It causes us to feel that pain and uncertainty. It causes us to perhaps question our own safety or to even question God. But it is important that instead of distancing ourselves from connecting with that pain, we allow ourselves to instead be moved to action.

Through our connection as United Methodists, we have the opportunity to help in relief efforts in an incredible way. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is a branch of the United Methodist Church specifically created to help in times of need such as this. In response to disasters, UMCOR uses 100% of the funds given to relief efforts and is often one of the few agencies that continue to help in recovery years after the disaster has occurred. This true and firmly held commitment to Christ-like love and service is something that we not only support with special donations like today, but we also make this vital ministry possible through our regular giving of our apportionments.

Today, as we celebrate our connection to all believers through Christ’s sacrifice, our communion rail offering will be given to UMCOR’s relief efforts. I encourage you to give what you can and to continue to offer your prayers in the days, weeks, and months ahead for those who are now faced with the daunting prospect of rebuilding their lives.