Ten years ago, on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina slammed into the US Gulf Coast as a Category 3 storm. Over 1,800 people lost their lives, and one million were displaced from their homes, some for years following the storm and others permanently.

In the aftermath, Episcopal churches organized food and volunteers, providing pastoral care as well as links to relief and recovery services. Regionally, churches hosted and cared for evacuees, aiding them in finding temporary housing and employment. Long-term program partnerships in Louisiana and Mississippi helped people rebuild their lives and revitalize their neighborhoods through case management, gutting and rebuilding homes and making mortgages accessible and manageable. Hurricane Katrina also marked the beginning of what is now Episcopal Relief & Development’s US Disaster Program, which equips and inspires Episcopal congregations to increase their resilience and care for their vulnerable neighbors.

Commemorating the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, Episcopal Relief & Development presents its #Katrina10 story series, offering in-depth perspectives from area residents as well as the organization’s partners and staff. These stories unfold through the month of August on Episcopal Relief & Development’s 75th Anniversary story section: http://www.episcopalrelief.org/75stories.
Hurricane Katrina transformed The Episcopal Church’s understanding of its potential role after emergencies, and it also transformed how congregations view mission, outreach and membership. A new initiative, Called to Transformation, helps congregations identify and utilize their gifts to enhance local ministry and mission. Churches are celebrating these ministries on the Episcopal Asset Map, a searchable online tool that shows the locations and strengths of thousands of Episcopal institutions.

“There is a growing awareness in The Episcopal Church of how an asset-based approach can unlock potential and inspire action, not only in a disaster response context but in responding to everyday challenges and creating thriving communities,” said Katie Mears, Director of Episcopal Relief & Development’s US Disaster Program. “Hurricane Katrina put a spotlight on problems that we continue to struggle with, but it also showed us how to create solutions. I think we honor those whose lives were impacted by Katrina when we build strong, diverse communities that care for those most vulnerable.”

Please continue to pray for and support communities affected by disaster, especially on this tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Visit Called to Transformation to discover tools for building resilience in your congregation, and share your successes on the Episcopal Asset Map.

• #Katrina10 Stories: http://www.episcopalrelief.org/75stories
• Called to Transformation: http://www.calledtotransformation.org
• Episcopal Asset Map: http://www.episcopalassetmap.org