

December 2017

# St. John's Eagle

The Newsletter of St. John's Episcopal Church

## A Message from the Wardens

Dearest St. John's Family and Friends,

Here we are again in December, the last page in the calendar. Here we are, it seems, at the end. As 2017 draws to a close, the world begins to look back over the past year, with all its happy times, and dark times, and all those times in between, and try to make sense of it all.

At the same time, for us as Christians, December is anything but an ending. For us, as Christians, December means Advent, and Advent is most certainly about the Beginning. The first season of our church year, Advent is the season of anticipation — of waiting and hoping, and preparing; a season of bright candles illuminating the longest and darkest of nights, so that we may watch closely for the story of Jesus to begin again.

In reflecting on the year 2017 at St. John's Church, it very much was a year FULL of waiting and hoping and preparing for the beginning of a new chapter in the story of our parish. We waited and hoped and prepared to receive a new rector, and just when our waiting appeared to be at an end, we experienced an unexpected change of plans, which felt a little like being plunged into a long, dark night in the middle of June.

But for every long, dark night that descends, God gives us bright candles to light the way. For St. John's, these metaphorical candles shone in many forms: a search committee that quickly regrouped to continue their work; lay leaders who have kept our ministries going (and begun work on new ones); wonderful supply priests who filled our services with enthusiastic and loving support, long-time parishioners who kept showing up, and newcomers who brighten and bless our community with the addition of their presence.

So when we look back on 2017 and try to make sense of it all, one distinct possibility is that God has been teaching St. John's how to be People of Advent — to be those who wait and hope and light the darkness, and who ever prepare to welcome the miracle of Jesus Christ into the world, not just in December, but every day of the year.

Have a blessed Advent, St. John's, and a very Merry Christmas.

Stephanie Nevels, Senior Warden  
Michael Roman, Junior Warden

## Save These Dates!

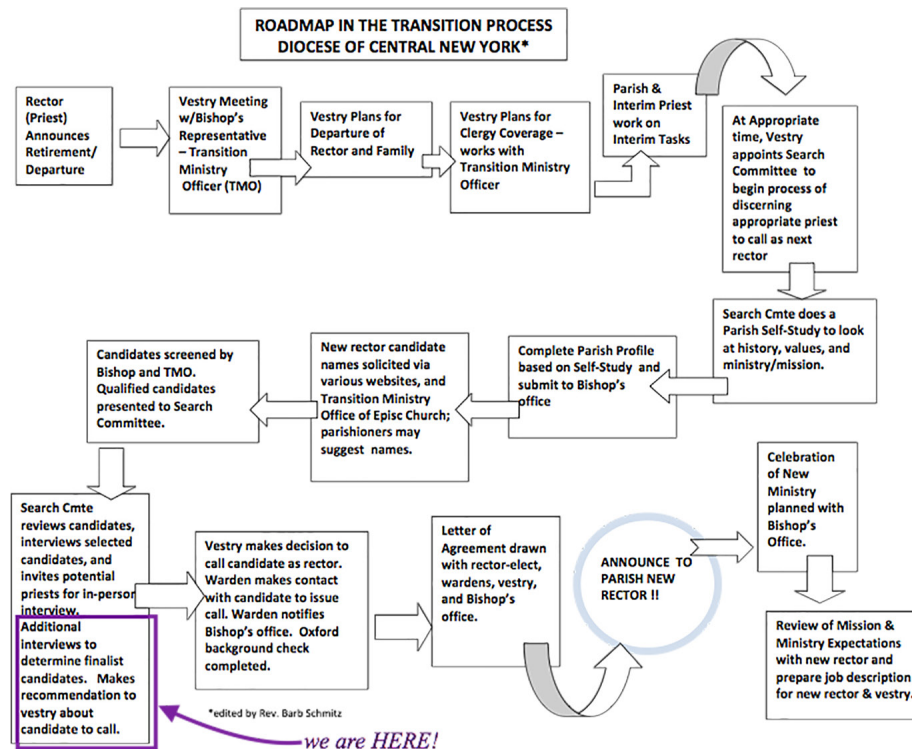
- December 24: One service at 9:00 a.m., followed by the Greening of the Church with warm cider and sweet treats  
Christmas Eve Services: 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m, with prelude at 10:30 p.m.
- December 25: Christmas Day! One service at 10:30 a.m.
- December 31: Morning prayer led by parish lay leaders, with music.

# Search Committee Update

By Michael Roman

As you can see from the map below, the Search Committee has been making speedy progress in the search for our next rector! Much of the work that the committee did in 2016 only needed minor updating, so we could start at the eighth step, with modification of the parish profile.

Many thanks to Committee Chair Marcia Baum, and to Committee Members Peg Coleman, Hugh Hurlbut, John Jackson, Jim Johnson, Michael Roman, Cora Yao, and past members for their dedication and hard work. The Committee is extremely grateful for the continuing support of parishioners, both in their participation and valuable input, and their ongoing prayer.



## Contributing to the Eagle

The St. Johns' Communications Committee welcomes articles and ideas for articles from the St. John's community, especially those regarding parish events, programs and services, achievements or volunteer activities, and other news of interest to our parish. Parishioners with ideas for articles they wish to write or an event or topic they would like covered, or who would like to write regularly for the newsletter are invited to contact any Communications Committee member. The committee reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, length and content.

Communications Committee Members:

Russell Bourne, Libby Hedrick (photo credit), Margaret Johnson, Jamie Parris (chair), Michael Roman, Matthew Sanaker, Lisa Tatusko, and Sara VanLooy.

## Communications Update

Join us on Facebook and Instagram! Keep up with the latest news and events on [Facebook](#) and enjoy our photos on [Instagram](#). Whichever medium you choose, we're excited to offer these forums, in addition to our website. See us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsithaca/> and search on Instagram for "stjohnsithaca."



Speaking of the website, you'll soon see a new homepage that is mobile friendly, with a few new features! Stay tuned!

# Music Notes

by Karen A. Hindenlang

**Lessons & Carols** for Advent was offered by the Chancel Choir in the 10:30 a.m. service of Holy Communion on Sunday, December 10. Five anthems, six readings, and several hymns combined to create a seasonal message in place to help prepare our hearts for the Birth of Christ. Our 20-voice choir sang a cappella and accompanied anthems with organ, French horn, and violin. Excerpts can be heard on the Music at St. John's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/StJohnIthacaChoir/>.

**Special Music** in December includes oboe player Nancy Siemon in the Prelude to the 10:30 Choral Eucharist on December 17. On December 24, handbells will be featured in the prelude to the 4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Eucharist service and flute and soprano will be featured in the 10:30 prelude to the 11:00 p.m. Festive Choral Eucharist. St. John's Choral Scholar Rachel Silverstein will be joined by her sister, flautist Rebecca Silverstein in bringing sweet music to our candlelit and beautifully "greened" church.

**Singing** in a choir is good for you! Research shows that choral participation boosts the immune system, reduces stress, releases endorphins, strengthens concentration, improves memory, increases confidence and much, much more. Plus — this is the best part — all these benefits come your way while you provide a loving gift to the parish community in our shared life of worship and prayer. Please see the Director of Music after any 10:30 service for more info about joining our Chancel Choir.

**New singers** who joined the Chancel Choir this fall are pictured here from left to right: Kevin Harris, Jesse Eshkol, Mike Griggs, Will Hoekenga, Charlotte Hoekenga, and Nicole Wills.

Kevin is a St. John's Choral Scholar from Upton, MA., and a voice major at Ithaca College. Jesse recently moved to CNY from NYC, and works as an assistant district attorney for Cayuga County. Mike moved to Ithaca last summer to begin a graduate degree program at Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations. Will and Charlotte, children of Sarah VanLooy and Owen Hoekenga, are students at Ithaca High School. Nicole is a voice major at Ithaca College and a St. John's Choral Scholar.



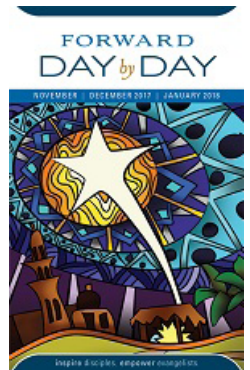
Please help us welcome these new participants in our Music Program, and thank them for their contributions to the worship life of St. John's Church!

## Forward, Day By Day Available Online and by Mobile App

by Jamie Parris

Did you know that you can access the information contained in the *Forward, Day By Day* booklets online and by mobile app? You can visit the website at [http://prayer.forwardmovement.org/forward\\_day\\_by\\_day.php](http://prayer.forwardmovement.org/forward_day_by_day.php) to get the daily meditation and many other resources to help you on your faith journey.

The mobile applicaiton is available for Android and iPhone for \$6.99. Look for it in your phone's app store. In addition to the daily meditation, the app also includes Prayers and Thanksgivings and Morning, Noon, Evening and Compline prayers from the *Book of Common Prayer*, 1979, as well as archives future readings from *Forward, Day by Day*.





## Parish Feature: The Stone of Lincolnshire

By Susie Backstrom

Have you ever noticed the block of stone, framed in wood, located beneath the stained glass window of St. Hugh of Lincoln in the chapel near the altar?

If so, did you ever wonder what it is or how it got there?

I noticed it when dusting the columbarium a couple of years ago. I wondered what it was. I thought perhaps it was a cornerstone from the first St. John's church building from the early 1800's, now incorporated into the newer structure.

I started asking long-time parishioners what they knew about it. Nobody knew anything. Many hadn't even noticed it.

Then I asked Rev. Richard Strauss\* when he was serving as a supply priest one Sunday this summer. Turns out, he knew! Here's what Father Strauss told me:

Rev. Warren Traub, a former rector of St. John's, went for a stay in England to recover from an illness. The window of St. Hugh of Lincoln already was installed in the chapel at that time. During his stay in England, Rev. Traub picked up the stone in a local quarry in Lincolnshire and brought it back to St. John's. The stone was installed in the wooden frame below the stained glass window of St. Hugh. Mystery solved!

Here's some information about St. Hugh of Lincoln (gleaned from Wikipedia):

Hugh was born at the château of Avalon in France between 1135-40.

At the age of fifteen, Hugh became a religious novice. He was ordained a deacon at the age of nineteen. About 1159, he was sent to be prior of the nearby monastery at Saint-Maximin. He was sent in 1179 to become prior of the Witham Charterhouse in Somerset, England.

Hugh presided over the charterhouse until 1186, attracting many new members. Among the frequent visitors was King Henry, because the charterhouse lay near one of the king's favorite hunting grounds. Hugh admonished Henry for keeping dioceses vacant in order to keep their income for the royal chancellery.

On May 25, 1186, the cathedral chapter of Lincoln was ordered to elect a new bishop. Hugh was elected. Hugh insisted on a second, private election by the canons in their

chapterhouse at Lincoln rather than in the king's chapel. His first election was confirmed by them.

Hugh was consecrated Bishop of Lincoln on September 21, 1186 at Westminster. Almost immediately he established his independence from the King. As a bishop, he was exemplary, constantly in residence or travelling within his diocese, generous with his charity, scrupulous in the appointments he made. He raised the quality of education at the cathedral school. Hugh also tried to protect the great number of Jews who lived in Lincoln from the persecution they suffered at the beginning of Richard I's reign, and he put down popular violence against them in several places.

Lincoln Cathedral had been badly damaged by an earthquake in 1185, and Hugh set about rebuilding and greatly enlarging it in the then-new Gothic style. Hugh only lived to see the choir well begun. In 1194, he expanded the St Mary Magdalen's Church in Oxford.

As one of the premier bishops of the Kingdom of England, Hugh more than once accepted the role of diplomat to France for King

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The stone from Lincolnshire sits in a framed box below the stained glass window of St. Hugh of Lincoln.



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Richard and then for King John in 1199, a trip that ruined his health. While attending a national council in London a few months later, he was stricken with an unnamed ailment and died two months later on November 16, 1200. He is buried in Lincoln Cathedral.

Hugh was canonized by Pope Honorius III on February 17, 1220. He is the patron saint of sick children, sick people, shoemakers and swans. Hugh is honored in the Church of England and in the Episcopal Church each November 17th. Just this past November 17th, The Very Reverend Christine Wilson of Lincoln Cathedral said of St. Hugh:

"One of the most lavish descriptions of him is as 'one of the most beautiful spirits that was ever incarnated in human clay. A man of the sunniest cheerfulness and of remarkable character and leadership'....

"Reform and renewal was at the very heart of Hugh's ministry as Bishop of Lincoln....

"Not only did he restore and rebuild the cathedral building, he also established what was described as 'trustworthy pillars.'

## A Prayer Over Pledge Cards

A formal ingathering of 2018 pledge cards took place Sunday, December 3. If you missed the ingathering, you can mail your pledge to the church or leave it in the offering plate.

The following is a prayer said over pledge cards, written by The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel, Diocese of Olympia.

Gracious and loving God, giver of all that is good and true and beautiful and life-giving:

These cards represent our sweat, they represent our lives, they represent our dreams.

The pledges which we make on them are but tokens of the awesome gifts that have been given to us and they are pledged in thanksgiving for all that we have received, for all we have been inspired to be, for all we are challenged to become, in this place.

May they be the first fruits of all we have and not what we have left over, so that we may live out as best as possible how you give to us.

May we see them as our offering to you, sacred, holy, yet earthy, filled with possibilities.

May we hold this image in our hearts and our minds so as we watch our offerings each week come to your table, we can see our very selves being part of this offering. It is us on the table, living sacrifice to you.

*Amen.*

## Requirements for Voting at the Annual Meeting

If you intend to vote at the St. John's annual meeting in January, please remember that the diocesan canons require you to be baptized, a member of St. John's, a regular attendant at worship, and a contributor of support to the parish for at least twelve months prior to the meeting. If you wish to transfer your membership to St. John's, please contact the office at (607) 273-6532. Transferring membership requires some lead time. Now would also be a good time to begin attending and giving regularly, if you are not already.

the living stones made up of outstanding clergy chosen for their integrity and sound learning.

"He taught of a Kingdom of heaven in which all could participate. Not just religious enthusiasts, urging the laity to demonstrate love in their hearts: to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God."

Hugh's primary emblem is a white swan, in reference to the story of the swan of Stow, which had a deep and lasting friendship with Hugh, even guarding him while he slept. The swan would follow him about, and was his constant companion while he was at Lincoln.

There are still many quarries in Lincolnshire. Most produce limestone, the stone used to construct Lincoln Cathedral.

\*Father Strauss has been associated with St. John's for many decades. In addition to serving as a supply priest when needed, he gives of his time to repair and maintain our church organ.

# St. John's Is a Jubilee Center, and That Is important

By Michael Roman

If you look above the door from the North Guild Room to the South Guild Room, you'll see this sign:



St. John's was designated a Jubilee Ministry in 2001 for its support for Loaves and Fishes of Tompkins County and its work with special-needs adults. When a church becomes a Jubilee Center, it joins a network of hundreds of churches throughout the Episcopal Church. A Jubilee Center joins in the fight against poverty and inequity and works to build up strong and empowered communities. Sharing resources, ideas, and connections makes a church's efforts even more effective. Jubilee Ministry is faith in action. It's a way of loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

The Jubilee Center designation honors the hard work of many at the church, particularly its outreach team and vestry, which enable and

empower the parish to become a place of service and advocacy for the poor and the oppressed. Every year, The Episcopal Church provides grants to assist currently-designated Jubilee Ministries in their work. These grants are intended to help ministries in their mission to create a more just society and confront structures that promote cycles of poverty and inequality.

Jubilee Ministries, created by an act of General Convention in 1983, encourage a ministry of joint discipleship in Christ with poor and oppressed people, wherever they are found, to meet basic human needs and to build a just society. Now in their 34th year, Jubilee Ministries seek to fulfill Christ's mandate found in the Gospel of Matthew: to provide for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, welcome for the stranger, clothing for the naked, healing for the sick, and companionship for the captive. Today, over 700 ministries (out of about 6500 parishes in the United States) across The Episcopal Church have achieved Jubilee status. St. John's is one of those 700.

For more information, see <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/domestic-poverty> .

## Arms Wide Open: The 149th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

By Michael Roman

The 149th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York was held on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 10-11, 2017, at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Liverpool, New York. The event was very reminiscent of the annual meetings we have at St. John's every January; the current state of the diocese was outlined, and a vision for its future was presented.

### State of the Diocese

Convention delegates voted on resolutions, accepted the diocesan budget, learned about ministry done in and by the diocese locally, nationally and globally, and heard Bishop Dede's assessment of where we are and where we are headed as a diocese.

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Resolutions relating to the business of running the diocese, and resolutions thanking various people and organizations for service to the diocese were presented and approved. Also, three resolutions came from the diocesan Antiracism Team (our Matthew Sanaker is one of three lay members) — all three of these resolutions were approved by delegates to the convention.

For a thorough description of the resolutions, see <https://cnyepiscopal.org/our-diocese/diocesan-convention/2017-convention-resolutions/>.

The diocesan budget, like the budget of the National Church, is structured around the Five Marks of Mission:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

You can download the narrative and financial details for the diocesan budget at <https://cnyepiscopal.org/download/budget-2018-approved/>.

Interestingly, the first thing mentioned in the budget presentation was an increased emphasis and spending on communication within the diocese.

### Vision for the Diocese

A half century or so ago, everyone was expected to go to church; nowadays, the cultural expectation is more that one does **not** go to church. This has resulted in smaller parishes; Bishop Dede noted that small is just small, and that small can be very good, especially when being small does not mean being isolated. I am seeing encouragement from the diocese for more lay participation and leadership, and for the fostering of relationships between parishes, between parish and the

## The Learning Communities Initiative

By Michael Roman

At Diocesan Convention this past November 10-11, delegates learned about the state of the diocese, and heard a vision for our near future articulated. An important part of implementing this vision is the Learning Communities initiative with Dwight Zscheile (author of *The Agile Church: Spirit-Led Innovation in an Uncertain Age*) and his colleague Michael Binder.



deaneries they are part of, and between parishes and the diocese.

In her address to the convention, Bishop Dede addressed these and other issues; she did not mention evangelism explicitly, but I felt its presence strongly “between the lines”. Bishop Dede also introduced a new program for parishes in the diocese: The Learning Communities Initiative, which is described in a separate article below. The Agile Church, written by Episcopal priest Dwight Zscheile, provides much of the inspiration for this initiative. The Rev. Dwight Zscheile, Ph.D. later addressed the 149th Convention on “Faithful Innovation in an Uncertain World.”

### More Information

- Convention lead page: <https://cnyepiscopal.org/our-diocese/diocesan-convention/>
- Bishop Dede's convention prolog: <https://cnyepiscopal.org/2017/10/bishop-dede-convention-149/>
- Bishop Dede's address: <https://cnyepiscopal.org/2017/11/tell-your-story-bishop-address-convention-149/>
- Rev. Dwight Zscheile's address: <https://cnyepiscopal.org/2017/11/convention-149-zscheile-address/>

Beginning in 2018, and led by a diocesan team of laypersons and clergy working closely with Dwight and Michael, the Learning Communities initiative will bring together leadership teams from congregations throughout our diocese to pray, learn, act, and reflect.

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The church of the future will in some ways be the same as the church of the past, and in some important ways, it will be different. There will be opportunities for parishes to work and grow together, and with the Diocese; one such opportunity is through Learning Communities, which are “group(s) of congregations who commit to one another in a nine-month learning experience. Through prayer, skill-building, action, and reflection, they address their most pressing questions about the future.”

On behalf of St. John's, our vestry has accepted the Diocese's invitation to take part in the Learning Communities initiative, and will identify four to six parishioners to be on a Guiding Team. Members of our Guiding Team will commit to:

- Three Saturday training workshops spread through 2018.
- One meeting a month (on average) of our Guiding Team.
- Engage others in our congregation in activities and learning throughout the process.

How will St. John's benefit? Through the Learning Communities initiative, we will:

- Train effective lay spiritual leaders through workshops and coaching.
- Learn to discern and respond to God's leading.
- Deepen our congregation's spirituality.
- Build connections with other congregations.
- Engage and inspire our membership.
- Affirm our faith that God has a vital role for our congregation to play.

More information about the Learning Communities initiative will be presented in the coming weeks. Information from the diocese is available at <https://cnyepiscopal.org/learning-communities>.

## Diocesan News

By Jamie Parris

If you feel so inclined, we encourage you to sign up to receive The Messenger, a weekly email newsletter from the Diocese of Central New York. It often includes highlights of National Church news from the Episcopal News Service as well as local news and events. Below are some highlights from those newsletters we think you might find interesting. Subscribe to The Messenger at <https://goo.gl/snwwej>. In addition, the diocesan blog is a great source for the latest news. Visit <https://cnyepiscopal.org/news-events/blog/>.

### **“Always God’s Love:” Bishop DeDe’s 2017 Christmas Message**

Source: The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe delivered a video Christmas message, asking us, "If you were God, and you wanted people to know of your love and your care for them, if you wanted to save them from their hard-heartedness and selfishness, how would you come to them?" Watch her video message at <https://goo.gl/Wvi6dZ>.

### **From Scarcity to Abundance: How a Small Church Survived and Grew Without a Full-Time Pastor**

Source: The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Moravia is a small church in Central New York. Through a “Team Ministry” approach that emphasizes lay leadership, the congregation and ministries have grown even though the church does not have a full-time priest or pastor.

Watch a video, recorded during a May 2017 presentation to the Central Crossroads Conference of the Upstate New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, wherein the people of St. Matthew's tell their story, at <https://goo.gl/t7bwbX>.

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## **Youth Winter Skating & Overnight (Syracuse)**

Source: The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

Youth in grades 6-12 are invited for a weekend of winter fun, sponsored by the Diocesan Youth Ministry. We'll spend the night at St. Paul's Church in downtown Syracuse (use the Montgomery Street entrance when you arrive) and enjoy skating at the Clinton Square Ice Rink. A Safe Church for Teens training will take place after closing worship at St. Paul's Church on Sunday. Youth leaders under age 16 must take this training annually.

To register, download the registration form available on the diocesan website at <https://goo.gl/AYoJwE>.

**When:** Saturday and Sunday, January 20 and 21

**Where:** St. Paul's Church, 310 Montgomery Street, Syracuse.

Visit [cnyepiscopal.org/youth](http://cnyepiscopal.org/youth) for a growing list of 2018 events planned for young people.

## **National Church News**

### **Presiding Bishop Michael Curry Christmas Message 2017**

Source: The Episcopal Church

"Have a blessed Christmas, a wonderful New Year, and go out and make music in the heart of the world," Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael Curry says in his Christmas message. Watch the message at <https://goo.gl/DDWpkb>.

### **Bishops United Against Gun Violence Calls Church to Pray, Elected Leaders to Act**

Source: Episcopal News Service

Bishops United Against Gun Violence, a group of more than 70 Episcopal bishops working to curtail the epidemic of gun violence in the United States, released a statement on the shootings on Sunday in Sutherland Springs, Texas asking elected leaders to act. Read the full statement at <https://goo.gl/Ckhwwr>.

### **Episcopal Relief & Development Responds to Southern California Wildfires**

Source: Episcopal Relief and Development

Episcopal Relief & Development is partnering with the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles to provide emergency support to help the most vulnerable impacted by the wildfires spreading across Southern California. This assistance includes gift cards and spiritual care for homeless and undocumented people in Ventura, Ojai and Santa Paula.

Learn more on Episcopal Relief & Development's website at <https://goo.gl/pPBAf7> or make a donation to the U.S. Disaster Fund to support the relief efforts at <https://goo.gl/efWSNn>.