

I am here today as a member of the Social Action Committee to ask for a Shared Offering for the victims of Hurricane Maria.

Vulnerable communities often face the worst destruction and slowest recovery. They have fewer resources to safeguard their homes, vehicles, and other property. When the winds die down and the floods recede, these communities are often forgotten.

The island of Puerto Rico is most definitely one of these communities. This is an island that was **already** struggling. It now finds itself in a state of devastation. "If I don't drink the water I'm going to die", says a Puerto Rican man who was helping himself to some water from a well that warned it was likely polluted.

I am speaking to you as someone who has **just a bit** of an understanding of the challenges of an island lifestyle. For the past 20+ years, Roger and I have camped on the island of St. John in the US Virgin Islands. **Everything** must be brought in.....by boat, by aircraft. **Much** human labor is involved. Resources are not readily available and are **always** more expensive. Nothing arrives quickly or easily. With that as the norm, the challenges after such a devastating hurricane as Maria are magnified greatly for an island such as Puerto Rico.

With these needs in mind, please consider a generous donation to help our, so often forgotten, US citizens. We are asking you to join us in supporting the Hurricane Maria Community Relief & Recovery Fund housed at the Center for Popular Democracy. This fund is listed as one of the UUA's disaster relief organizations. One hundred percent of monies raised will support immediate & long term relief. The Maria Fund has already made grants to local organizations that are both providing immediate relief needs and laying the foundation for an equitable long term rebuilding.

Thank you for considering and supporting this very much needed and worthwhile **SASO**.

*Helen Hutchinson*