

SWC Welcomes Co-Coordinator for Disaster Ministry

The Southwest Conference United Church of Christ joyfully announces the appointments of Rev. Dr. Gloria Smith and Rev. Tom Davis as Conference Co-coordinators for Disaster Ministry.

Rev. Smith will primarily serve Arizona churches. As a bi-vocational minister, she has spent 40 years working in government and corporate settings as well as in ministry. This experience has required the ability to manage interagency organizations and priorities. "While procedures require management skills," says Smith, "faith communities have numerous talents that can assist families and communities facing uncertainty and trauma. Our talents are enhanced by a spirit of service and a call to love and serve our neighbors."

Rev. Smith is pastor for Encanto Community Church UCC. She says she volunteered to be the Southwest Conference Disaster Coordinator, "because we often are unaware of the needs of communities or families and what we can do to help other than write a check. These needs cover not only the increasing number of natural disasters that occur in Arizona and throughout the world but also refugees/immigrants entering Arizona and Church safety and security. Collectively our talents and life skills can make a significant difference in others' lives through knowledge, preparation and service if churches coordinate resources and covenant together in service." Rev. Smith moved to Arizona in 2003 with her wife, Debbye, with their horses and other pets.

Rev. Tom Davis will primarily serve our churches in New Mexico and El Paso. He lives in Albuquerque with his wife, Melanie, and is part of First Congregational UCC. Rev. holds ministerial authorization with the Christin Church (Disciples of Christ).

Previously Rev. Davis worked for Church World Service (CWS) in Disaster Response and Recovery. He was part of the team that helped organize communities after disasters in long term recovery, worked with CWS member-denominations and their specific programs, provided training and mentoring, and built programs with National VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster) and the various states VOADs. Rev. Davis is a recognized leader in disaster ministry, and has a keen interest in the UCC Disaster Ministry Emotional and Spiritual Care Team nationally. He has already begun sharing his gifts with us generously through his response to the fires in New Mexico.

In coming weeks you will hear from Revs. Smith and Davis about how your congregation can participate in the [UCC's "Willing to Respond" program](#) and other initiatives that are part of [UCC Disaster Ministry](#). To reach them please email office@uccswc.org or call the SWC office.