

# Walking With Our Neighbors:

---

## 10 Ways to Commemorate the Three Year Remembrance of the 2010 Haitian Earthquake

### 1) Linking to Other Churches

While our individual churches' efforts will be important in these remembrance activities, our efforts will be enhanced and multiplied through collective action. This can happen by getting best practices from other churches, sharing resources, and raising greater attention across churches in your conference. Beyond linking to other United Methodist churches in your conference, you can also try reaching out to Haitian churches in the area. Identify churches that have had mission trips to Haiti in your area or other churches and groups that are interested in doing something to maintain a connection with the people of Haiti who are continuing to rebuild. The body of Christ is further lifted up as we act in community rather than just as individuals.

### 2) Screen a Movie

Movies can be an easy way to involve others and allow them to have a common experience and go beyond statistics to get a better understanding of people's stories. One potential activity is to organize a movie viewing and facilitate a discussion afterwards. Movies like:

- [Strange Things: Children of Haiti](#),
- [Égalité for All, Black in Latin America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic: An Island Divided](#), or
- [Frontline Documentary](#)



can act as ways to not only inform your congregation about Haitian history and current challenges, but be used as a medium to foster greater dialogue afterwards. These movies are free to access and provide opportunities for rich discussion.

### 3) Collective, Organized Prayer

In many spiritual traditions, including ours, prayer is a powerful vehicle to convey our deepest desires to God, to create connections with our brothers and sisters, and to find strength and discernment in difficult times. Prayer is also an integral part of Haitian people's lives and can help bridge very different experiences people might have. Engaging in both individual and organized prayer is one important way we can connect to Haiti and the continued rebuilding effort. As a church, you can assign prayer dates for people and take volunteers to open up your chapel on January 12th. Another possibility to consider is to translate your prayers into art that can be displayed in various parts of your church.

### 4) Give

The act of giving, both of our time and resources, is an important part of our Christian tradition. To that end, this three year remembrance can provide a unique opportunity to focus our congregations on intentional giving that supports Haitians in rebuilding their country. Consider investing in work that is sustainable and empowering to the people. UMCOR and the Methodist Church of Haiti are embarking on several community development projects like school gardens, microfinance, and healthcare which you can support through this [UMCOR advance](#). Learn more about the Methodist Church's efforts to "[be in ministry with](#)" the global community, and consider adopting [giving principles](#) in your congregation that honor the value of each person as a capable child of God.



## 5) Advocacy

As churches in the most powerful country in the world, we are in a unique position to be witnesses and raise our voices for the people of Haiti here in our country. Several bills and Congressional efforts need action in the coming year. The three year remembrance of the earthquake provides an ideal opportunity to raise our voices. Advocacy activities such as letters, phone calls, and member visits can act as a powerful witness to why not only we as congregations, but we as a country must continue to walk with our Haitian brothers and sisters as they rebuild their country. For more information around advocacy issues related to Haiti contact Ace Parsi at [workforchangetoday@gmail.com](mailto:workforchangetoday@gmail.com).

## 6) Hold a Candlelight Vigil

Candlelight vigils can be solemn, powerful ways to convey and focus a connection to a specific cause. If this is part of your church's tradition, a candlelight vigil being held either in the city or in your chapel can be a significant way to express grief for the lost lives in the 2010 earthquake and convey solidarity with the people still working to rebuild their country.



## 7) Give Your Congregation an Update

Many of us were shocked at the magnitude of the devastation that came with the 2010 earthquake. Nevertheless, as time continues to pass and cameras leave Haiti, it can be easy for Haiti to fade from our congregations' collective memories. This three year remembrance provides a great opportunity to refocus our efforts and remind our congregations of the importance of being good neighbors. This can be done through a variety of venues including having the senior minister preach on Haiti on January 6th or 13th, having congregants create informational tables with literature on Haiti, or organizing events before or after the service with outside speakers, Haitian food, and/or Haitian music.

## 8) Engage Your Youth

Remembering the Haitian earthquake, honoring the victims, and standing in solidarity with the Haitian people does not need to be simply an action for adults. You should encourage youth to get involved as well. Youth engagement can vary by age group. It can be something as simple as teaching your children's choir a Haitian song; making art and writing letters to children in Haiti; or poetry readings and discussions for older youth.

## 9) Direct Service

Direct service is still an important way that we are called as communities of faith to act in this world. It is a way we can bridge boundaries and deepen our own spiritual connections to a cause. When it comes to Haiti, there are things we can do here at home like packing [birthing kits](#) or [school kits](#). Your church could also use this as an opportunity to get interested individuals together to start [planning a mission trip to Haiti](#).

## 10) Write an Op-Ed

In Matthew 5:15, Christ tells his disciples that people should not "light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house." Similarly, if we care about Haiti and the Haitian people, then our testimony does not have to stay in our churches. If your church chooses to do this, join us in writing in various mediums in conference newsletters, local newspapers and other venues why you felt this connection was important.



A resource provided by:

