

# Local churches collect health kits for earthquake relief in Haiti

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The need for health kits in Haiti is immediate. In the face of natural disasters, violence, or poverty, these kits can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families.

The United Methodist Committee On Relief Depot in Baldwin, La., has 68,000 health kits in their inventory. They expect 30,000 more in the next few days. They will send health kits as soon as they receive the authorization from Haiti.

In Nevada, St. Paul Lutheran Church and the United Methodist Church are both collecting Health Kits that will ship out early in the morning on Monday, Feb. 8, to Baldwin, La., to join the shipment being prepared for Haiti.

The Health Kits have one hand towel, 16-by-18 inches, one wide-tooth comb, one nail clipper, one bar of soap (bath size, in wrapper), one washcloth, six adhesive bandages, one toothbrush (in original packaging) all items must be new and should be sealed in a one-gallon plastic bag with zipper closure. Toothpaste is added at the time of shipping so as to always have a fresh tube of toothpaste.

Anyone in the community who would like to donate a Health Kit can bring their packaged Health Kit to St. Paul Lutheran Church at 15156 East Pony Hill Road or to the United Methodist Church at 500 South College.

In addition to normal hours the United Methodist Church will be open on Saturday, Feb. 6, from 10 a.m. to noon, and on Sunday, Feb. 7, from 3 to 4 p.m., to receive donations of any Health Kits.

For additional information call the United Methodist Church at (417) 667-5435.

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Those donating to charities providing earthquake relief in Haiti may be able to claim those donations on your 2009 tax return. Here are 10 important facts from the Internal Revenue Service about this special provision.

- \* A new law allows taxpayers to claim donations for Haitian relief on the 2009 tax return.
- \* The contributions must be made specifically for the relief of victims in areas affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti.
- \* To be eligible for a deduction on the 2009 tax return, donations must be made after Jan. 11, 2010 and before March 1, 2010.
- \* In order to be deductible, contributions must be made to qualified charities and can not be designated for the benefit of specific individuals or families.
- \* The new law applies only to cash contributions.

\* Cash contributions made by text message, check, credit card or debit card may be claimed on the federal tax return.

\* Taxpayers must itemize deductions in order to claim these donations.

\* Taxpayers have the option of deducting these contributions on either your 2009 or 2010 tax return, but not both.

\* Contributions made to foreign organizations generally are not deductible. Taxpayers can find out more about organizations helping Haitian earthquake victims from agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development ([www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)).

\* Federal law requires that taxpayers keep a record of any deductible donations made. For donations by text message, a telephone bill will meet the record-keeping requirement if it shows the name of the organization receiving the donation, the date of the contribution, and the amount given. For cash contributions made by other means, be sure to keep a bank record, such as a canceled check or a receipt from the charity. Receipts should show the name of the charity, the date and amount of the contribution.

For more information see IRS Publication 526, Charitable Contributions and Publication 3833 Disaster Relief: Providing Assistance through Charitable Organizations.

To determine if an organization is a qualified charity visit [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov), keyword "Search for Charities." Note that some organizations, such as churches or governments, may be qualified even though they are not listed on [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov).

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