

We are in dire need of volunteer crews to come south and assist with cleanup at Grace Lutheran Church in Key West, FL. Most of the homes on the island experienced salt water intrusion from the storm surge. Here is an excerpt from the report filed this morning by Rev. David Mueller of Marathon who went to visit Grace yesterday:

Yesterday, Cassie and I visited with Pr. Michel Heidle and congregation at Grace Lutheran, Key West. I brought the greetings and encouragement of the District President and staff, and underlined what Pr. Heidle had already told the congregation: "Help is on the way." His words on LDR, LCMS World Relief, etc were spoken quite knowledgeably and followed a wonderful pastoral sermon on God's care in difficulty as we continually reform ourselves as followers of the Truth, i.e. the person of our Lord and Savior, as we walk through difficulties.

There is a GREAT NEED FOR IMMEDIATE clean-up assistance teams to be on the island as soon as possible. 80% of the island was flooded with salt water, resulting in many, many homes (most of which are older and built on grade which includes the parsonage). Jet skiers were operating on Flagler Avenue in front of the church/parsonage complex, Pr. Heidle reports. The parsonage has been severely damaged with salt water intrusion, roof damage. They have no refrigeration or food preparation ability. Like so many others, they are taking their meals at the Baptist Hot Food distribution center with an occasional MRE.

While tourists are welcome to return to the island as of today (Monday, 10/30), it gives the appearance that all is well. The truth of the matter is that the economy is based on tourism so, as dysfunctional as the island life is, tourist dollars are necessary, integral and basic to any recovery.

JoAnn Broadbent, the director of the 100 member pre-school, kindergarten and child-care ministry, was particularly hard-hit by the storm. She reports that "My house is in ruins. Max and I can't live there." Yet she and her husband, Max are working most industriously to prepare the child facilities for use. They are living in borrowed quarters, while working tirelessly to re-open the early childhood ministry which they plan to do this morning.

Angie and David Rose, long time professional church workers at Grace Church, are in similar circumstances.

These circumstances are duplicated in other church families across the island with varying degrees of severity and, of course, in other than church families.

Cassie and I were able to enjoy lunch with the Heidle and the Rose families and our conversations reflected a great sense of ministry amidst the current situation.

But assistance is needed:

IMMEDIATE CLEAN-UP CREWS ARE DESPARATELY NEEDED.

There seems to be some floor space available in a few of the school classrooms, self-contained teams would be most beneficial.

LONG-TERM UNMET NEEDS WILL BE ON THE AGENDA FOR THE FOREABLE FUTURE.

Networking with LDR/LSF and the various Dade-Monroe faith-based recovery ministries will be called for. I have spoken with Beth von Werne about this matter, both in terms of Key West/Lower Keys and Marathon/Middle Keys.

In terms of **PASTORAL MINISTRY**, it seems that a retired pastor who has an RV or self-contained mobile home/trailer, would be of GREAT assistance as Pr. Heidle both meets the pastoral needs of his parishioners, as well as providing Christian outreach to the community, many of whom, Pr. Heidle describes, as "having the blank stares of traumatized people."

I would heartily recommend this short-term (1-2 months) effort at pastoral care. The community needs a pastoral listener and encourager, not, necessarily an "evangelist," *per se*, but one who can easily adapt to a crisis situation with sensitivity and care.

Many schools in S. FL. have minor damage, i.e. many trees down, some shingles gone, etc.

*Our Savior, Lake Worth (Sandy Capton) has lost the entire sanctuary that could seat about 500. It basically imploded and is a total loss.

The school has minor damage, but there is much emotional suffering by many. Power poles are leaning against the

school building.

*Trinity, Delray Beach (Tim Guelzow) has extensive damage to the roof of its two story school building. They have been able to cover much of it so they will hopefully be able to avoid further damage from water.

*St. Paul, Boca Raton (Jeff Krempler) lost the steeple from the church, has taken on some water in the gym (don't know about damage), had a covered walkway dislodged and the covering destroyed, has a light pole down and there may be other damage that I am unaware of.

*Shepherd of the Coast, Ft. Lauderdale (Derek Bohlmann) has extensive damage to the aluminum siding on the church and school buildings. A very large stained glass window in the church was blown out and the sanctuary took on water. Windows were blown out, an ac unit on the roof has been displaced, vents have been blown off and there has been some water damage in the school building. They have real concern for their hourly workers income as they may be without power for an extended period of time.

*Faith, Hialeah (Ruth Wessling) will probably need new roofs on the church and school.

*Grace, Key West (Joanne Broadbent) has significant damage. One of the school buildings took on six inches of water during the storm surge. Many staff and members (including Joanne and Pastor Heidle) took on water in their homes. Joanne (who I would guess is near 70) said that her home took on three feet of water. They are in need of people to come and help with clean-up at school and in homes. It is an immediate need.

Contact Lutheran Church Charities at 866-455-6466 or at LCC@LutheranChurchCharities.org for more information or to volunteer.