

Greetings to the Saints of Mission Presbytery!

I want to give a special shout-out to Rev. Suzy Royston and the Boldtville congregation for the lovely service they planned and hosted November 8 to help us pray with and for the members of the Sutherland Springs community. They were welcoming, hospitable, and supportive for those of us who gathered.

I'm happy to tell you that, at the service, \$864 was collected in an offering to support that community. Also, if you were not able to attend the service, would like to hear a fine sermon from Suzy, and have access to Facebook, you can see it on the Mission Presbytery Facebook page. I understand that Tricia is also working on downloading it to our website; watch for it there too. (Speaking of which, THANK YOU to Tricia for her steady hand in recording!)

Jim Kirk from the PDA office in Louisville, and Jim Ellor (a National Response Team member from Waco) were with us for the service, as was our Synod Leader, Valerie Young. There were also at least a couple of people present who were not connected either to Boldtville or Mission Presbytery, but had heard about the service on Facebook. I'm so glad that we were able to minister to at least two other people who clearly needed to be there.

A few people had a chance to tell their stories at the beginning of the service; others were able to offer prayers from the heart during the Prayers of the People. Gathering, telling, sharing, praying – that is what will get us through devastating times like these.

Some have asked about making donations to support that community. As always, you can send any donations here to the Presbytery, and we will help them find their way into the right hands. I know that Suzy and the Boldtville church also have connections there and can help.

There are other needs as well, as you can imagine. There is a need for attorneys who can help settle estate issues, who can help with children now without parents, and more. There is also a need for volunteer bookkeepers and accountants who can help the overwhelmed families and survivors sort through things. And, there is going to be a need for money for funeral expenses. If you have attorney or bookkeeping services which you could volunteer, or if you would like to donate to help with the funeral expenses, please let me know and we will put you in touch with the right people where you can help.

We've also received some handouts from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance which might help you in worship this weekend. You can link to those handouts elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter. The topics include what can be done if there is an active shooter, appropriate children's sermons, talking with children and youth, working with the media, and more.

Jim Kirk also recommends the following books which may be of help to you as you and your congregation work on processing grief, or preparing helpful worship services, or coming up with your own congregational plan for disaster response:

Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters: A Guide for Pastors and Congregations after Violence and Trauma by Laurie Kraus, David Holyan and Bruce Wismer (note: the Kindle version of this book is currently free at Amazon.com!)
Stilling the Storm: Worship and Congregational Leadership in Difficult Times by Kathleen S. Smith

A Ready Hope: Effective Disaster Ministry for Congregations by Kathryn M. Hauelsen and Carol H. Flores

Praying for you and for us all, beloveds. Grateful to be in ministry along with you.

PRESBYTER SIGHTINGS

November 10 – Meet with Committee on Preparation for Ministry

November 11 – Ordination/installation for Jennifer Mitchell, Karnes City First

November 12 – Preach for Austin Faith anniversary service

November 12 – Installation for Kevin Boyd, Boerne St. Mark

November 13 – Memorial Service for Linda Evans, Austin University

November 14 – Gathering with Victoria Region congregations

November 19 – Final worship service for Portland First

November 23 – Happy Thanksgiving!

November 27-December 3 – Vacation time

December 4 – Meet with COM

December 6-7 – Meet with faculty of Presbytery Leader Formation

December 9 – Ordination of Sarah De La Fuente, Austin Central

December 10 – Preach for Beeville First