



Dear colleague in ministry,

Thank you for your prayers for and generosity toward those affected by Hurricane Dorian. As of today (Monday, September 9), nearly \$72,000 has been donated to our Emergency Relief Fund since we began soliciting contributions on September 2.

Many of you have contacted our office or asked on social media about EPC relief efforts. We have been in daily communication with Bryn MacPhail, Pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Kirk in Nassau, which suffered only minimal effects from the hurricane. Sadly, he reported that a St. Andrews member and a cousin of a St. Andrews Ruling Elder are among the casualties in Marsh Harbor.

We've also been in regular contact with Gabe Swing, Pastor of Kirk of the Pines in Marsh Harbor, Abaco, which took a direct hit from the storm (Kirk of the Pines is a church plant of St. Andrews Kirk). Gabe and his family were in Tennessee when Dorian made landfall in the Bahamas. His return has been delayed twice, but he hopes to arrive in Nassau this Wednesday. The challenge the Swings face when they return to Marsh Harbor: their home has been described as "unlivable."

The recently constructed Kirk of the Pines building received minor damage but is "standing strong on the main road" of Marsh Harbor. The indications are at that it is one of the very few structures in Marsh Harbor still intact. An estimated 13,000 homes in the immediate area of the church have been destroyed, including the homes of many Kirk of the Pines families.

Due to the lack of power and wifi connectivity, we weren't able to establish good contact with Ken Lane, Pastor of Lucaya Presbyterian Church in Freeport, until Saturday. Ken reports that the island of Grand Bahama also received significant wind and flooding, although not as extensive and devastating as on Abaco. The good news is that the Lucaya building did not endure flooding and suffered only minor exterior damage. When the banks in Freeport re-open in the coming week, EPC emergency relief funds will be sent as requested from Ken, who is still assessing the needs this weekend with his leadership.

At this point, St. Andrew's has been the staging point for Marsh Harbor relief work, with the Kirk of the Pines building being the center for that effort "on the ground." With the help of \$75,000 wired from our emergency relief fund on Wednesday, September 4, a small truck was purchased for \$7,500. It's being used to deliver much-needed supplies to the church.

However, on Sunday night there were reports that mandatory evacuation orders would be announced soon. Bryn wrote, "Sending supplies to Marsh Harbor appears to no longer be prudent at the moment.

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Receiving teams to help rebuild also seems like something that will need to wait until we hear what the government intends for the city.”

You are probably aware of news reports that a large number of Marsh Harbor inhabitants are leaving, with many headed for Nassau. At St. Andrews Kirk, two Sunday School classrooms have been converted into temporary lodging. Bedding, towels, and other necessities have been purchased and church members have supplied groceries. At least eleven Marsh Harbor evacuees will be housed there.

Three more quick notes and prayer requests:

1. With the evacuations to Nassau, there are now more members of Kirk of the Pines in Nassau than there are in Marsh Harbor. Please pray for Gabe as he returns and ministers to his dislocated flock.
2. Bryn's wife, Allie is a certified therapist and is a part of a mental health team with the Family Medicine Center in Nassau. They have been at the Nassau airports to provide evacuees with what has been termed, “Psychological First Aid.” Pray for this team as they perform this incredibly important ministry.
3. Looting is already a major problem in Abaco and Freeport. Pray for the protection of those supplies, the safety of those protecting them, and of course, the recipients of that help.

Finally, pray for Bryn and the entire congregation at St. Andrew's. He wrote on Sunday afternoon, “I sense that we are being forced to wait before we get a clearer sense of where, and how, to best assist. Our elders meet on Wednesday evening. Please pray for us as we meet and attempt to discern the best way forward with relief assistance.”

You can donate to our Emergency Relief Fund at www.epc.org/donate/emergencyrelief. Donations are sent directly to our EPC churches in the affected areas for needs they identify in their local communities. And just as a reminder, donations that exceed local recovery requests from affected EPC churches may be held in the general EPC Emergency Relief Fund to be used for future emergency relief needs (this is why we had a balance in the fund and were able to wire money to St. Andrew's even before the full effects of the hurricane were known).

We will continue to keep you updated on efforts in the Bahamas, as well as other areas affected by Hurricane Dorian. Thank you for your continued prayers for those affected.

Jeff



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