

# Fixing the Florence Devastation: "Mudding Out" In Conway, SC

An Interview With the Rev. Jason Collins, Rector of  
St. Paul's Church, Conway, on October 2, 2018

by Joy Hunter, Diocese of South Carolina



**JH:** *The last time we talked the water was receding. What's the status now?*

JC: It's still receding, but we've got a ways to go. I expect it's about where it was two years ago after Hurricane Matthew. Houses on the edge of the flooded area are accessible now. Clean up efforts have begun.

**JH:** *What kind of help do you need?*

JC: What's really needed now, more than anything, is labor—there's a lot of cleaning up to do. There's a little misunderstanding and I don't want to discourage anybody from bringing supplies, but I think a lot of people have the impression that when they're coming to clean up a house they need a mop and a bucket and soap, but when we're talking about cleaning out a house we're talking about taking a hammer and a crowbar and a shovel and a wheelbarrow and tearing out anything that's wet—carpet, sheetrock, subflooring, tile—and getting it back to a shell and letting that dry out. Also, people need to bring their own tools. I went yesterday to learn the process and had only a pair of gloves. I expected everything to be there. That was not the case.

**JH:** *Tearing out sheetrock with a hammer and a crowbar sounds hard. Are there jobs for weaklings?*

JC: There is less intensive work to be done, like packing up personal belongings that can be salvaged. Yesterday we worked with a team from AmeriCorp. Because I hadn't brought tools, my job was to stand outside with the wheelbarrow and haul debris that was shoveled out the window to the street. People can serve food. We also need people to love on people, pray with people, make connections.

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Financial Donations and Manpower:  
How We Can Be Part of the Solution

by Joanna Ghegan, St. Philip's 2019-2020 ECW President



By the grace of God Charleston was spared from the wrath of Hurricane Florence. Unfortunately, our neighbors to the north of us in towns like Conway and Buckston, SC, did not fare so well. The waters have receded now, but they have left behind an uninhabitable mess of mud, mold, and water-logged homes. People are unable to return to their homes due to the toxic conditions. Even worse, these unfortunate flood victims are running out of money to pay for the hotels they are using as temporary homes. Because these areas are not considered flood zones, insurance is not offering any relief, and FEMA has not adequately responded to these victims' needs. It's help from churches like ours that are providing clothing, food, water, and cleaning supplies.

This past weekend, my family and I traveled to Conway along with a group from Seacoast Church who brought clothing donations that filled a whole room, clothing for all ages from infant to adult. This generous group also brought cleaning and hygiene supplies in addition to food.

After our visit to several devastated homes and shelters, it became apparent that the most pressing needs right now are financial donations and manpower to help with the cleanup. Several women from the community reported people are running out of money to pay for their hotels and are being ousted from these temporary homes.

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please visit [ardf.org/relief-2018-hurricane-florence](http://ardf.org/relief-2018-hurricane-florence). If you are interested in volunteering, please contact me at [gheganj@comcast.net](mailto:gheganj@comcast.net) or 843-425-2431. For more photos, visit our Facebook page at [facebook.com/stphilipchurchsc](https://facebook.com/stphilipchurchsc).

**Collins Interview**, continued from front page

***JH: In the photo the people are wearing hazmat suits. Is that necessary?***

JC: I think that's the standard operating procedure for AmeriCorps. Most people were not wearing hazmat suits.

***JH: About how many houses need assistance?***

JC: The number estimated is 1000 in Conway, 10,000 in Horry County.

***JH: How do you choose which house to go to?***

JC: We're partnering with Impact Ministries, a local group the county is coordinating their efforts through. They've been given access to the maps which show which houses flooded and which ones didn't.

***JH: About how long does it take to mud-out a house?***

JC: That depends. But how much time someone can give shouldn't stop them from coming. Truthfully they appreciate whatever help you can give. I was only able to help for about an hour and a half yesterday. Any help is good.

***JH: Does the homeowner have to pay for any of this?***

JC: No. They do sign a waiver or permission slip, saying they understand that the team is coming in and will tear stuff out. It's to protect people's liability. That's another reason we partnered with Impact Ministries.

***JH: What is the money donated used for?***

JC: It's for general flood relief, supplies, feeding those out of their homes, feeding relief workers. People are lining up daily to receive food.

***JH: Where are the people who are out of their houses living?***

JC: A lot of people have had to find places to rent, or rooms in a hotel. Elizabeth, our church secretary, who had just moved back into her home after hurricane Matthew, is staying in a hotel.

***JH: What should people know before they come?***

JC: They need to bring their own bedding [if they plan to stay overnight], bring their own tools. We'll provide breakfast and a bag lunch. Impact Ministries will provide a hot meal for supper and they'll deliver it to St. Paul's. Whether people can come for an afternoon, a day, or several days, we need help.

*To find out how you can help, contact Stephen Haynsworth, Diocesan Disaster Preparedness and Relief Coordinator, at [haynsworthsa@hotmail.com](mailto:haynsworthsa@hotmail.com), or contact Joanna Ghegan, who is working on putting together teams from St. Philip's, at 843-425-2431 or [gheganj@comcast.net](mailto:gheganj@comcast.net).*