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AN APPEAL TO SUPPORT IRMA RECOVERY

September 14, 2017

Dear Bethesda Family,

From the Caribbean, and all across Florida and Georgia, and through the Carolinas we are coping with the impacts of Hurricane Irma. The clergy and staff are here for you during this time of recovery. Please let us know how we can be of help to you or if you know anyone in our parish family who could use some care and encouragement in this challenging time.

I ask each of us to hold in our prayers all those who experienced loss of life, home, or livelihood, as well as any who still require rescue. Please also pray for those who await relief and those heroic people working night and day in rescue and restoration efforts.

One great grace during times like this is witnessing neighbors helping neighbors, from small acts of kindness to tremendous feats of bravery and self-sacrifice. Many of you have been that instrument of Christ's love, and others have been the recipient of this kind of compassion from another, and this fact brings great joy.

Though Palm Beach and Bethesda were spared the worst of Irma, we will in coming days have a great deal of work and expense to get our landmark buildings and grounds in shape. A complete assessment is currently underway. As a result of Irma **there will be extraordinary expenses** in the days and weeks to come for us, including building repairs, landscape remediation and cleanup, and interim service provision (such as running our generator).

As we move forward, we need both to tend to our parish life to ensure that we are able to launch our program year from a position of strength, and also to extend our innate gifts of generosity and compassion to those who are suffering the effects of this storm. **I ask you, please, to make a financial gift to Bethesda**—over and above your regular financial support—that will help us to accomplish two goals:

- First we need to ensure that Bethesda is free to focus on our mission to *love and serve* God and our neighbors, beginning our program year financially strong, and not letting these extraordinary expenses impede our mission.
- Second, we need to enable Bethesda, through our partnership with Episcopal Relief and Development, to offer aid to others suffering as a result of Hurricane Irma.

Please go on our website today (or [CLICK HERE](#)) and make this gift. You can also call the office to make a gift or mail a check and mark it "Irma." The Vestry will make a determination as to the exact allocation of these special gifts once we have a clearer picture of our financial situation.

As always, we give God thanks for the many blessings bestowed upon this parish family and our ministry in Palm Beach and beyond. Your faithfulness and generosity are powerful signs of God's grace that is so deeply present here. Thank you for your attention to this and your generosity in being an integral part of our mission. I look forward to seeing you in church soon as we begin an exciting new chapter in our parish life.

Peace,

The Rev. James R. Harlan
Rector

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