



The Bishop's Appeal for Hurricane Relief  
Phase II

*O Clavis David*  
20 December 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ  
and Friends of the Episcopal Church in Southeast Florida,

*O come, thou Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
Make safe the way that leads on high  
and close the way to misery.*

Christmas is coming to the Keys. On this day of Advent when we recite the great Antiphon to the One who is the Key of David who brings life to those in the shadow of death, I am on a pastoral visit to the Keys where I have had the opportunity to visit our churches and ministries this week. This is my fourth visit since the hurricane, and the evidence of the good work of relief, recovery, and restoration is all around. Our clergy and congregations continue to be at the forefront of being the messengers of the One “who closes the way to misery,” and so many are so grateful for all the generosity that our diocesan family and our wider Episcopal Church have provided so that people here can re-build their lives.

So today from the Keys I send to you not only my gratitude, but the gratitude of our sisters and brothers here, and all those whom they are serving, to all individuals, congregations in our diocese and throughout the Church, and others who have given so generously in the first phase of our appeal.

But as we all know, the recovery here, as well as in the neighbouring islands of our region, is slow and there is still much work to be done. Indeed, this period is going to last for some time.

Hundreds of people remain desperate for accommodation. Many are still sleeping in their cars, with relatives, in their damaged and unsafe homes, and in hotels paid for with short-term FEMA vouchers. With all of our donations so far, including a grant from Episcopal Relief and we have obtained 17 trailers for Marathon and the Lower Keys. We shall be acquiring more trailers to provide temporary accommodation for families during the repair and rebuilding of their homes damaged by Hurricane Irma.

On this trip I have met several individuals and families whom we are helping. A couple, employed in the city of Marathon, using their boat as affordable housing, sheltered in one of our buildings at Saint Columba. During the storm their boat was washed 30 feet into the mangroves and initially they thought it was a total loss. Three months later, the Coast Guard was able to pull the boat out of the mangroves, return it to a dock, and now it is being reconditioned to be their home. Without the gift of the trailers, this couple would have left the Keys. We see in this and in so many stories the gift of the presence of the ministry of the Church that is literally helping to keep our Keys communities together.

We are called to be daily grateful to God for our life and salvation in Jesus Christ, and we are called to give thanks for each other, for we depend on God and each other for our common life.

And so, in these last days of waiting for the coming of Emmanuel, we launch Phase II of our diocesan-wide appeal. As before, the Bishop's Appeal is in three parts:

### **1) APPEAL FOR FUNDS**

Money remains the most effective tool for recovery. The money that you give will:

- Give a Family a Home this Christmas. Designate your gift to help us rent or purchase travel trailer homes for displaced people in the Middle Keys.
- Assist individuals and our communities where FEMA, ERD, and Church Insurance cannot help
- Assist congregations, clergy, and parishioners who may have various needs for which there is no other avenue of support, especially as these needs continue to reveal themselves in the Keys
- Enable us to send some much-needed support to our sisters and brothers in dioceses in those islands in our region who have also been so terribly affected by the storm

Individuals, our congregations, and our schools may make gifts of any amount. Please send your donation to the Diocese of Southeast Florida, with *Bishop's Hurricane Appeal* in the memo line, to the Bishop's Office:

The Diocese of Southeast Florida  
525 NE 15 Street  
Miami, FL 33132

You may also go to our Facebook page and use the "Donate" button or go to our website's donation page: [http://www2.diosef.org/www2/online\\_donation.php](http://www2.diosef.org/www2/online_donation.php). Once there, please mark "Emergency Relief (undesignated)" or "Emergency Relief (specify)" If you choose the latter, you must indicate your preference for the use of your contribution: Keys Relief, Our Neighbors Impacted by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, or Travel Trailers for the Middle Keys.

### **2) COLLECTION OF GOODS AND NEEDED VOLUNTEERS**

If you have any of the items listed below for donation or are able to volunteer to help in the removal of debris, please contact Mr. Rick Kidwell or Ms. Bonnie Weaver.

Mr. Rick Kidwell  
Disaster Coordinator, Middle Keys  
727-204-6385  
[kidric2012@gmail.com](mailto:kidric2012@gmail.com)

or

Ms. Bonnie Weaver  
Episcopal Charities  
561-308-3742  
[bonnie@ecsefl.org](mailto:bonnie@ecsefl.org)

## **Needed Goods**

### Personal items

Work gloves  
Work boots  
Long sleeved shirts  
Long pants/jeans  
Bug Spray  
Sunblock

### Other Items

Large contractors trash bags  
Wheelbarrows  
Hammers  
Pry bars/flat bar

## **Volunteers Needed for Heavy Labour**

For the removal of debris indoors and outdoors.

### Indoors

Furniture/appliances  
Personal belongings  
Trash  
Drywall

### Outdoors

Downed trees/branches  
Shrubs and other vegetation  
Trash of all sorts, including boat parts

## **Groups scheduled for work trips to the Keys**

Four workgroups made up of adults and youth from Philadelphia, PA, Winston Salem, NC, and two from Diocese of SE FL are confirmed and coming between Christmas and the summer. Five group trips are in the planning stages. Contact Rick or Bonnie to organize a workgroup visit.

### **3) OUR NEIGHBOURS**

With the exception of the Keys, we were, by comparison to some of our neighbours, spared the most severe damage. Our spiritual and material sacrifice in the aftermath of this storm must be to give all that we can to support those who have borne the brunt of this storm. We shall continue to receive donations for Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, Cuba, and Bahamas. And we shall send a proportion of our undesignated appeal funds to them.

So far since the hurricane we have had a record-breaking appeal. In terms of money, volunteers to help, and donated goods, this has been a remarkable response from our diocese. The wider Church has also responded so generously, and Episcopal Relief and Development alone has sent us over \$100,000. I have seen with my own eyes what this means to the community of the Keys, and it is both the Gospel and the Church in action.

Let us not ease up at this stage, just as our people in the Keys cannot yet rest. As the New Year opens, whatever you give, however you respond, please be as generous as you can be, so that we may show to others the truth of Emmanuel, who is God in our midst.

This appeal will be open until the end of February. Please publicise this appeal as broadly as you can in our congregations, schools, and special ministries.

With my gratitude and every blessing.

*+Peter*