

Sandy Recovery Ministry

Calvary Presbyterian Church

September 15, 2013

The congregation of Calvary Presbyterian Church, Allenwood, NJ, has been privileged and blessed to serve the Central Jersey shore communities in the wonderful name of our King and Savior, Jesus. The storms at the end of 2012 affected thousands of families and destroyed or damaged thousands of homes.

By the grace of God, our congregation suffered only minor effects of the dangerous weather. Churches from Florida, California, Virginia and New Jersey reached out to provide resources so that we were able to create a diaconal fund devoted to storm relief for local families. The MNA (Mission to North America) Disaster Response helped to establish our congregation as a local relief center, providing logistical support and large financial grants. Without the financial aid of the MNA Disaster Response and the personal guidance and support of Arklie Hooten, Disaster Agency Director, Sherry Lanier and Ann Bautista we could not have operated an effective storm-recovery ministry.

Volunteers from among the congregation of Calvary Church organized a ministry to provide housing, meals and logistics. We partnered with a local OPC congregation, Faith Bible Church, in Brick, NJ. Charles Farrell, a Deacon of that congregation, served as project coordinator to organize the work projects. The members and property of that church were seriously impacted by the storms and we directed a significant portion of our efforts and resources to them. We were able to reach out to ten families of that congregation. Fully eight of those families have been able to return, full-time, to their homes as of this writing. We also assisted in the recovery and repair of the OPC church facility and grounds. Some of the volunteers assisted in the salvage of the former building (which was rendered uninhabitable) used by the OPC congregation in Seaside Heights and in their relocation to the Faith Bible Church building in Brick (which eventually resulted in the merger of the two congregations into the Faith Bible Church, OPC congregation). Volunteers assisted in the repair of the Faith Bible Church building and grounds as well as the manse. The manse was able to be used to house some volunteers following some repairs.

Another four families from other churches were assisted. We also partnered with Step of Faith Ministries and served a number of families through them. Among other relief efforts, Step of Faith Ministries distributed "bathroom in a box," "bedroom in a box," and "kitchen in a box" materials. The boxes were large plastic storage bins which contained essential items to replace those lost in the storms.

Our congregation provided a freezer, food and volunteers for soup kitchens which offered daily meals for months to various communities. In fact, we met an elderly woman at one of these dinner occasions who was going through chemo-therapy. She had lost everything and we were able to help her get back into her home, providing financial assistance, some furniture and volunteer labor. Many such stories come to mind as the Lord opened doors for us into the lives of those needing His love.

Some of the communities which we were blessed to serve through these various partnerships include Brick, Seaside Heights, Seaside Park, Mantoloking, Neptune, Lavallette, Toms River, Point Pleasant, and Manasquan. We also assisted New Life PCA church in Middletown, NJ with finances. They housed displaced people for some weeks and we supported that effort with a grant of \$2,500.

Some of the volunteer teams made additional contacts with families while working in the disaster areas. Individuals were also referred to us through word-of-mouth and FEMA personnel. In every case, our volunteers were careful to share the Gospel as the Lord gave opportunity. One of the teams, for example, comprised of the entire high school senior class from Coastal Christian Academy in Maine, worked hard for months to raise money in order to fund their trip to the Jersey shore. They were housed in our church and had no living expenses for the week. As a result, they were able to help an older couple to whom the Lord led them one afternoon. The man and his wife were completely overwhelmed with the scope of the work needing to be done. The young people were excited to be able to purchase the materials with the funds that they brought with them and complete a huge part of the work to repair the home. It was a special blessing to the volunteers and a real ministry to the couple. Some of the team shared their testimony with these folks who were now open to hearing the Gospel. Similar scenarios were repeated by other teams of young volunteers who brought with them the funds that they had raised back at their home communities. One team from a church youth group organized a boardwalk ministry during the evenings of their stay with us.

Because of the funding provided by MNA Disaster Response and the churches and individuals who contributed, our congregation was able to provide housing and meals, free of charge, to the volunteer teams. We opened our church facilities for housing quarters and offered as many comforts as possible to the team members. We provided tools, supplies and materials for the work projects. We made thousands of dollars in Home Depot gift cards available to the teams and the families for building materials, appliances, furniture and other necessary items. The people of our congregation graciously cooperated to make hot meals available to the teams every evening. Often the teams were invited into the homes of our members for fellowship along with the meal. Breakfast and lunch items, snacks, water and ice were on site every day so that the volunteers had all of the meal items that they needed during the work day.

The ministry continues. We have teams scheduled to arrive later in September, in October and in November for long weekends. It is our prayer that our communities will see the love of Christ displayed in very tangible ways by those who give so graciously and liberally of their time. May God alone have the glory!

“Which commandment is the most important of all?” Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:28-31 ESV)

MNA DR grants provided	\$32,500
Church and private donations	\$14,185
Calvary Congregation	5,000
Street Preacher’s Ministry	1,000
Grace Church, CA	5,600 (+ \$650 in Home Depot cards)
Covenant Church, FL	1,000
Covenant Church, NJ	1,000
Resident of Williamsburg, VA	100
Donations from volunteers	485
Expenses to date	- \$39,109
Balance as of Sept 1, 2013	\$7,576
Volunteers hosted to date	161
Number of days teams hosted to date	81
Hot meals provided to date	1,065
Breakfasts and lunches to date	2,140
Total meals provided to date	3,205

It is difficult to detail the total number of families and/or homes assisted in this effort. We partnered with the Faith Bible Church, OPC congregation, Step of Faith Ministries, New Life Presbyterian Church, various churches in the shore communities and the multitude of volunteer teams. Each of these entities touched multiple families in the name of Christ. Our part in the effort was to provide housing, food and logistical support for the volunteers in addition to funding for building materials, furniture, gravel, dumpsters, tree removal and many such diverse needs in the communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Springer,
Ruling Elder
Calvary Presbyterian Church, PCA
Allenwood, New Jersey