

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."—John 15:7



Coordinating PCA Disaster Response in the US & Canada

1 NEWS FROM NEW BERN NORTH CAROLINA

I had the privilege of being at the MNA disaster recovery site in New Bern NC a few weeks ago. As you may remember, Hurricane Florence pounded New Bern last fall resulting in catastrophic damage to the city and neighboring communities. Now, six months later, some neighborhoods still appear apocalyptic while others seem untouched by the rage of Florence, almost like a tale of two cities. If you drive in an un-flooded neighborhood, there's no evidence that a historic tropical storm smashed this historic city. But if you drive into a flooded area, your senses are still assaulted with the sights, sounds and smells of moldy, rotting, nasty piles of debris gathered up by all kinds of workers volunteering to clean up a mess none of us made.



Ellen McLaughlin, from Concord, NC, a godsend to many, has been on-site coordinating volunteers, assisting Village Chapel PCA Pastor Norm Evans. She has a truck camper where she and her pup sleep each night and has grown quite fond of New Bern. However, it has been a cold and wet winter. We pulled the shower trailer we originally had on site for our volunteers to prevent it from freezing in December. We are scheduled to take it back before the end of March. I am thankful that even in the cold winter, volunteer mobilization has been steady.

While I was there a large team from Wisconsin was serving. They were in good spirits; a real encouragement to us and the displaced homeowners and were happy to be wearing t-shirts and shorts since Wisconsin was frigid and buried in deep snow at the time. I tried to get them to stay a few more weeks, but they had paying jobs back home waiting for them. How lovely that folks would drive for two days, buy expensive gasoline, use valuable vacation days and time away from their families to serve us and displaced families which they many never see again this side of heaven. This is the Gospel.

After performing a multitude of disaster response tasks, including serious mucking and gutting, we have narrowed our focus to assisting five families go the distance in finishing their homes and returning home. We are also committed to rebuilding Village Chapel's 'Mission House', which is one of the important outreach ministries that provides traveling missionaries and pastors a place to be restored and get a needed respite. In New Bern alone, an estimated 4,300 homes were damaged or destroyed in the storm and over 300 businesses faced the same fate. Damage to homes caused by floods tend to be costly. FYI, only about 3% of NC homes had flood insurance pre-Florence. FEMA states that the estimated potential loss for a 1,000-square-foot (yes, the folks we are assisting live in small houses) single-story home with possessions worth \$20,000 that is inundated with just one inch of interior water can run as high as \$11,000 for materials, according to FEMA data, and the estimated loss for five inches of water climbs to more than \$18,000. Some of the homes we are working on in New Bern were flooded 48" or more. I think those figures are not accurate, they seem super-low to me.



We would love for you to bring a team to New Bern. We are now in the stage where we need volunteer teams with experience hanging and finishing sheetrock, installing trim and flooring. Apprentices are always welcome, however. Please join us in praying for a continued robust mobilization of volunteers during the Spring and into Summer. Please visit pcamna.org to give, go, pray.

NEWS FROM PANAMA CITY FLORIDA

Hurricane Michael recovery work continues at a strong pace in Panama City. The PCA has three churches in town, Korean PCA, Covenant PCA, and First PCA, all of which suffered considerable damage to their physical plants. During the early days of the response we were offered the use of the Laguna Beach Christian Retreat Center to house our volunteers. This was a real blessing while it lasted, but we had to pull up stakes when the center began readying for their retreat season. At that point, with the permission of First PCA we developed 'Camp Faith' on the back lot of the church property. With your help we purchased a new US Military Temper Tent for feeding and gathering, and sent two of our mobile bunkhouses and a shower trailer along with lots of other equipment from our Rome GA warehouse. We have settled in for a long haul. Keith Perry, our FL specialist is providing site management and Rick Lenz, our TX/OK specialist is assisting. John Browne, our Sheds of Hope specialist, is overseeing the construction of shed builds; more than 50 have been scheduled so far, but the list is growing.



We continue to work on damaged homes of PCA members, along with the homes of their neighbors, and continue to demo First PCA's sanctuary, christian education building and offices. We have a constant stream of RUF students and PCA campus ministers serving here. Over spring break and summer conference RUF students are participating in a 'blitz build', of sorts, learning how to build sheds for displaced home owners.

The vision here in Panama City is for the sanctuaries and christian education spaces to be restored. And for every vision, typically there is a battle. It isn't going to be easy or quick, and it will take a lot of resources, perhaps several million dollars. Hurricane Michael knocked the power off in Panama City, but there's no power shortage here at our worksites. Our church family and volunteers are "strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" - Ephesians 6:10. The Bible reminds us that whole armor of God is ours - Ephesians 6:13, and the schemes of the devil are no secret - I Corinthians 2:11, before the burning light of God's Word.

The Lord Jesus Christ will build His church, including the local expression here in Panama City, and the nations will come streaming in, Mount Zion will be filled with worshipers, and heaven will join earth once again. These are the ancient promises that cannot be thwarted, cannot be thwarted, this is our hope. We would love for you to participate in what God is doing here on the Gulf Coast. Perhaps your way of participating can't be boots on the ground at this time, but you can pray for us. Maybe you can provide funding for those who can go now. You can navigate to pcanet.org to learn how.



3 NEWS FROM THE MNA DISASTER RESPONSE WAREHOUSE

MNA Disaster Response donors provided funding to purchase two new Bobcat skid steer loaders in December, taking advantage of year-end record rebates. They are already proving to be great recovery tools at our Panama City worksites. The gifts also allowed us to purchase two new specialized trailers, a 16' hydraulic dump trailer for debris removal, and a 22' gravity tilt trailer to transport Bobcats, forklifts, and other large equipment to our worksites.



If your team would like to get trained and become certified in the use of this new equipment please be in touch with Mike Kennamer, MNA Disaster Response Training Center Manager. mkennamer@pcanet.org. He can arrange for the training and walk you through the necessary steps.

We have monthly volunteer workdays at the warehouse in Rome GA. We would love for your church to make us your mission. Volunteers help prepare relief supplies, load trailers, maintain equipment, clean, and usually there is a light construction project going on. Currently we are building a ADA-compliant shower room along with a laundry room. Ok, so this is actually a heavy duty construction project. Having these additions added to the campus will open up even more possibilities for year-round traveling mission teams to serve here.



Also, we have regular training taking place here. This week we have a large group made of of folks from all over traveling here to be trained on Sheds of Hope building skills. The shed they build during their training will in turn be transported to Panama City and assembled on a displaced homeowners property to store their personal property during the rebuilding process. Let me know if you would like to come to Rome for a special disaster response training event. We would love to host you.

[A Personal Note From Arklie & Prayer Requests](#)

Thank you for continuing to pray for your PCA/MNA Disaster Response Ministry. We have experienced record mobilization of volunteers over the winter; for that we are humbled and overwhelmed with gratitude for your participation. We are entering the Spring tornado season while we are still very much active in NC and FL responding to the hurricanes of last year. Would you pray with us for more opportunities to train, more resources to respond, and for continued stamina for our staff, key leaders, and volunteers?

Also pray for additional disaster response leadership in the Carolinas. We are seeking a regional coordinator for each of the Carolinas; maybe you know someone who I should be in contact with? If so, please let me know.

Serving you with my whole heart,

Arklie

Arklie Hooten

MNA ShortTerm Missions & Disaster Response Director

Mission to North America / Presbyterian Church in America

Please click below to make donations to the following ministries:

[Arklie's Personal Support Fund](#)

[Disaster Response Mobilization Fund](#)

[Warehouse Operations](#)

If you would like to mail your gift, please mark your gift for MNA Disaster Response and mail to:

Mission to North America, PO Box 890233, Charlotte NC 28289-0233