

Update from the Rector and Senior Warden
May 6, 2010

Dear Friends,

In our desire to communicate daily with the parish this week about the status of our clean-up and damage assessment efforts, we also want to be sure you are aware of our great gratitude for all of your prayers and expressions of encouragement and support. Additionally, we are so very impressed with the numbers of parishioners who have contacted us to offer volunteer help this week. The number of people who have signed-up for volunteer service through our parish website is in the hundreds.

Please read the gracious report below from Rowanne McKnight, Vestry Executive Committee member and Commissioner for Mission and Outreach. She furnishes additional important information on volunteer coordination and needs.

As the week has progressed, staff and lay leadership have identified several important projects requiring such volunteer help, so we are extremely grateful for all of you who have given considerable time and energy to help us these past few days. These volunteer efforts are also a rich blessing as they represent a very meaningful cost savings to the church.

Earlier correspondence with you mentioned that the church has flood insurance. We believe it is important to stress, however, that the damages to the church are extensive, and the costs of the clean-up followed by anticipated months-long repair and renovation will be significant. Be mindful that no area of the lower level of the facility (more than 57,000 square feet) was untouched by the flooding. The magnitude of the damage is becoming increasingly clear, and we feel it necessary to communicate the possibility that St. George's material costs from this disaster will be considerably higher than our flood insurance benefit.

Our beloved tradition within the wider church places a high emphasis on the sacramental character of this world. We believe the material forms, physical spaces, as well as earthly realities like water, bread and wine can convey deeply sacred meaning. We are aware that our church facility is not merely bricks and mortar, dry-wall and carpet. In fact, the church is not like any other building. It is here within these walls that so many of us have had deep experiences of God in all kinds of ways, especially in our worship, in our fellowship, and around life's major transitions such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. Each of us is affected in legitimately emotional and spiritual ways by seeing our cherished church facility so damaged.

Please know that your parish leadership is taking great care to oversee to the very best of our abilities the restoration of St. Church's buildings. However we are mindful that the chief cornerstone to our common life is none other than Jesus Christ our Lord. In Him are both our strength to continue our efforts today and our hope to trust, as ever, that the best is yet to come for this very special and very strong community of faith.

Yours faithfully

Leigh Spruill

Bryan Essary