



**EPC**

*A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

**THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL**

## **October 2019**

In the EPC, we place a high value on the biblical, spiritual connection we enjoy as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, and as churches in a denomination that is Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional.

One of the features I love about our “little band of churches” is the way we rally around and mobilize spiritual and material support for those suffering and in need, be it caused by a hurricane, fire, or flood; or a colleague in ministry imprisoned for his faith in Turkey.

Truly this is 1 Corinthians 12:26 in action: “When one member of the body suffers, all suffer with it”!

Thank you for so visibly demonstrating this statement of who we are with your prayer support and financial generosity when disaster strikes—in whatever form. It is a blessing that means so much to me as your Stated Clerk.

Once again, you showed your love for Christ and for your brothers and sisters in need in response to the devastation in the Bahamas from Hurricane Dorian.

We continue to stay in contact with Ken Lane, pastor of Lucaya Presbyterian Church in Freeport; Gabe Swing, pastor of Kirk of the Pines in Marsh Harbor; and Bryn MacPhail, pastor of St. Andrews Kirk in Nassau.

We are committed to responding as quickly as possible to the needs that they communicate to us. What makes this challenging is the continually changing situation on the ground, especially in Marsh Harbor, the town of about 6000 residents that took the full brunt of the storm.

After the devastation there, the migration of survivors out of Marsh Harbor reminds me of the thousands of people who left New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, never to return.

Many of you have contacted our office or asked on social media about EPC relief efforts. At this point, St. Andrew’s Kirk in Nassau is our primary staging point for this work. Nassau received little to no effect from the storm, and is actually receiving many of the evacuees from the harder-hit areas.



We've been told that the Kirk of the Pines building in Marsh Harbor had water covering the floors and lost a few roofing shingles, but is otherwise intact. The building is fairly new construction, so it weathered the storm better than most of the rest of the city. Reports I've seen have indicated that as many as 90 percent of the homes in Marsh Harbor were destroyed. And sadly, we have been told that a member of Kirk of the Pines lost her life in the storm, as did the cousin of one of St. Andrew's Kirk's elders. So please pray for these grieving families.

We expect the Kirk of the Pines facility to become a center for relief activity eventually. However, the devastation of the area and the number of people evacuating the island of Abaco makes it unclear when that might occur.

In Freeport, the Lucaya church building also escaped significant damage. Ken told us that while they experienced quite a bit of wind and flooding, the church received only exterior minor exterior damage and no flooding at all.

I want to share three prayer requests for the situation as it stands now:

First, with the evacuations there are now more members of Kirk of the Pines in Nassau than there are in Marsh Harbor. Gabe is in Nassau now, and please pray for him as he ministers to his dislocated congregation.

Second, looting is a major problem in Marsh Harbor and Freeport. Pray for the protection of those supplies that we send, the safety of those protecting them, and of course, the pray for the recipients of that help.

Third, Bryn MacPhail's wife is a certified therapist and part of a mental health team with a local medical center in Nassau. They have been at the Nassau airports to provide evacuees with what has been termed, "Psychological First Aid." Pray for this team as they perform this incredibly important ministry to evacuees.

We will continue to keep you updated on efforts in the Bahamas, as well as other areas affected by Hurricane Dorian. As a reminder, you can donate to our Emergency Relief Fund online at [www.epc.org/emergencyrelief](http://www.epc.org/emergencyrelief). We have a text-to-give option also, and for those who prefer to write a check, our mailing address is on the online donation form.



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As of September 13, we've received almost \$100,000 into the EPC Emergency Relief Fund. Donations are sent directly to EPC churches in the affected areas for needs that those churches identify to us. And just as a reminder, donations that exceed local recovery requests may be held in the general EPC Emergency Relief Fund to be used for future emergency relief needs. This is why we had a balance in the fund and were able to wire money to St. Andrew's Kirk even before the full effects of Hurricane Dorian were known. Part of that money was used to buy a small truck to help get relief supplies from the docks to the church in Marsh Harbor as quickly as possible.

So thank you for your prayers and for your generosity. Beyond the Emergency Relief Fund, we can only do this relief work on your behalf with your financial support for the EPC through Per Member Asking. Those gifts allow us to have the infrastructure in place to respond when our brothers and sisters in Christ in the EPC need us the most.

So thank you in advance for your continued support for the EPC through that giving.

Thank you, God bless you and remember, He is risen!