

Brothers and Sisters in Christ in John Calvin Presbytery,

From numerous media outlets we are aware that Joplin, Missouri has sustained damages from the worst tornado event in recent Missouri history. In this time of need, we are called as God's people to be a people of prayer and compassion.

Bethany Presbyterian Church was damaged by the tornado storm. Broken windows, water damage and yet they congregation was spared the loss of major recording/sound equipment and church records. Pastor Rodney Peters is in touch with members of the congregation and spent some of this morning boarding up window spaces. Rodney has received stories from those who have lost homes or have not heard from loved ones.

First Presbyterian Church was not damaged by the tornado. Pastor Dave Burgess was with the youth group in the basement when the tornado stormed through town on Sunday evening, and no one was hurt. However, like his colleague at Bethany, he is aware of folks who may be missing or have lost their homes. In this initial 24 hours since the storm, there is still much information yet to discover regarding the missing, the lost, the dead, and the physical needs of those who reside in the community.

John Calvin Presbytery has secured a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Emergency Aid Grant for both congregations in Joplin in the amount of \$10,000 for each church. PDA sends this relief through the Presbytery, and that application was made early this morning. In addition, the PDA office in Louisville will deploy a small team to Joplin to work with local pastors and the JCP-PDA network to assess spiritual and other needs (the PDA Team may also be working with the local Red Cross). Our Fort Scott, KS church has already mobilized to assist with sending a truckload of materials to Joplin, and the Mt. Vernon First congregation has offered to provide whatever is necessary. Nancy has heard from the pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Tulsa who wants to help, and their congregation will begin collecting bottled water to bring in Joplin, MO. In addition, a sister presbytery, Heartland Presbytery, started an appeal on their website for their congregations to donate to PDA and specifically earmark the donation for the Joplin Tornado. We are deeply encouraged by the desire of others to assist during this disaster. Please watch your email for updates and needs. We want our help to interface well with the other emergency teams on the ground in Joplin.

Everyone is asked and encouraged to pray for the people, churches and community of Joplin, MO. Pray for Rodney and Bethany Church and Dave and First Church, for those whom they love and serve, and the community that is their home. May our friends feel the presence of Christ's peace through the consistent, dedicated discipline of our prayers for them. In addition, please do consider what financial aid you might be able to offer to assist with physical damages, pastoral cares, and spiritual need.

However, **PLEASE DO NOT DRIVE TO JOPLIN.** The local Emergency Management Team and other authorities are still very busy assessing the situation on the ground. Please wait for the official word to be invited to the Joplin, MO area.

Thank you John Calvin Presbytery for your praying spirits and caring hearts. Please watch your email and our JCP website for updates and notices. God is with us and we are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Elder Bill Pollock
Moderator

Reverend Melana Scruggs
Stated Clerk

Reverend Nancy Kahaian
Acting General Presbyter