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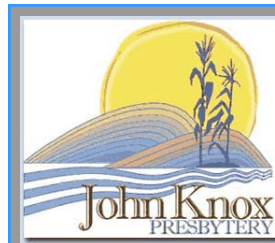
Late Summer Flooding Affects PTCA-John Knox Churches

By Dennis Sanders, IT/Communications Specialist, Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

August has not been kind on Minnesota.

After a summer of near record drought in Minnesota, and then the collapse of the Interstate 35W bridge in Minneapolis on August 1, southern Minnesota received a deluge of water over the weekend that caused severe flooding in several communities as well as seven deaths. According to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, the weekend rains have uprooted hundreds and washed away roads, bridges and homes. The *Star Tribune* reported late on Monday evening the total amount of rainfall that fell in several cities in the Region and the numbers are astounding: Wikota, Minnesota- 17 inches; Utica- 14 inches, the Northwest side of Rochester- 11.1.

The rain has affected many in the area including several congregations in the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and the neighboring John Knox Presbytery. On Monday, Office Manager Risa Anderson contacted churches in the region to assess the situation. Some congregations, such as First Presbyterian in Claremont, are



The John Knox Presbytery was hard hit by the late summer floods. Transitional Associate Executive Presbyter, Ken Meunier, wrote an email to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies addressing the situation as well as how you can help. The letter is located on page 3.

dealing with flooded basements. "We have a very wet carpet in the basement, but no other damage. We are in the process of working with our insurance company to get

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the carpet cleaned and dried, but not sure when that will happen as the cleaning folks have numerous projects due to the flooding," said Interim Pastor Leah Elrod in an email on Monday. First Presbyterian in Rochester reported water in the lower levels as well as some water in the sanctuary.

Paul Moore, pastor of Community Presbyterian in Plainview, said that many in the congregation were affected by the flooding. "We had many people with wet basements. Some people in our congregation lost items in their basement. Some were evacuated from their houses. Fortunately no injuries," Moore said.

On Monday, Neal Solomonson, pastor of First Presbyterian in LeRoy was stuck in Dallas due to conditions at the Minneapolis/St. Paul airport. He had heard the conditions at LeRoy were bad, and would contact the Presbytery office once he returned home. At the time of this writing on August 22, Risa Anderson has not heard from Pastor Solomonson.

The neighboring presbytery, the *Continued on next page*

Flooding, continued

John Knox Presbytery, which includes extreme southeastern Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin has been hard hit by the flooding. In a letter sent by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, Ken Meunier, the Transitional Associate Executive Presbyter for John Knox, notes the flooding has touched many in the area, including himself and the presbytery office. "We are still in the middle of trying to reach some of our communities to determine the needs and assess ways we may be able to help," Meunier said, adding that Internet and phone service to the Presbytery Center in Richland Center, Wisconsin has not been fully restored.

Meunier notes that the areas that were hardest hit include the Minnesota towns of the Rushford, Lewiston, Utica, Winona and Chatfield (which all have Presbytery churches) and the Wisconsin towns of Richland Center area (including the communities of Viola, Readstown, rural Viroqua, Chaseburg and Desoto where there are not any Presbyterian Churches); and the Soldiers Grove and Gays Mills. Meunier listed several churches that are in need of some assistance. A full list of items needed by John Knox churches can be found at the PTCA website (www.ptcaweb.org).

Meunier will meet with Jim Anderson, the regional representative for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance on Wednesday to assess the situation and determine if a fund will be set up for individuals or churches to give to.



A Letter From the John Knox Presbytery



Ken Meunier.

Editor's note: This was an email sent by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on August 22. It was originally sent to all the churches in the John Knox Presbytery.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you one and all for your outpouring of love and concern for our dear friends and neighbors who have been suffering with many kinds of loss as a result of the recent floods across John Knox Presbytery. Your phone calls and offering of assistance have been greatly appreciated.

We are still in the middle of trying to reach some of our communities to determine the needs and assess ways we may be able to help. With another round of storms last evening complicating our efforts we have decided to communicate to you a partial list of needs and contacts. We are hoping John Knox Presbytery's phone and internet lines will be restored soon to enable us to give you updates of those needs on a more regular basis. The Presbytery Center is able to receive calls but out going calls are difficult. We hope to have internet service restored in the next couple days. I extend a special thank you to the Synod of Lakes and Prairies for helping us with this communication.

The major areas hit by this most recent disaster include the Southeast Minnesota area – affecting the Rushford, Lewiston, Utica, Winona and Chatfield churches (along with the communities of La Crescent, Hokah and Houston); the Richland Center Wisconsin area (including the communities of Viola, Readstown, rural Viroqua, Chaseburg and Desoto where there are not any Presbyterian Churches); and the Soldiers Grove and Gays Mills communities which don't have Presbyterian churches but are communities many of you pass through to get to the Presbytery Center.

Here are the needs we are aware of at the present time:

Chatfield, Lewiston and Utica churches will need work crews to help remove carpet and clean prior to Sunday's Worship. Each of these churches had flooding in their basements. The hope is to have the insurance adjusters inspect the sights today so work can begin on Thursday or Friday. Contact Cindy Timm 507-523-3637. Utica is seeking child-care for the community to allow adults to work on helping each other clear out basements and begin repairs. Coordinate with Doug Rosendahl 608-687-5433 or Cindy Timm 507-523-3637 who are coordinating this effort.

We know we will need work crews in the Rushford and Gays Mills/Soldiers Grove communities but they are not ready for outside crews at this point. We are currently checking on providing meals for the various shelters that have been established for residents of the communities listed above.

I will be meeting this evening with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) Representative, Jim Anderson, this evening to further assess the situation and to begin coordinating work team efforts. This meeting will also help us know whether there will be a PDA fund for churches or individuals to contribute to. Until then, funds can be sent to your church and they will be given further information in the next couple days.

This communication is going to the church's email address so please help us spread the word by forwarding to pastors and church leaders across the Presbytery.

If you have questions please feel free to contact us at 1-800-424-7935 or 1-608-647-8828.

Blessings,
Ken Meunier
John Knox Presbytery
Transition Associate
Executive Presbyter



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER
ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Another way to help those affected by flooding in the Upper Midwest is by donating money to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. You can donate by going to website at: <http://www.pcusa.org/pda/donate.htm>.

You can also send a check by mail to: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Central Receiving Services 100 Witherspoon Street Louisville, KY 40202-1396