

The Southern Regions Response to Hurricane Helene

After the recent damage caused by Hurricane Helene, all our Churches remained unharmed, but the area surrounding us did not. With a tremendous amount of help from Churches, (some from our region and some from other regions), community groups, and individuals, The Southern Region Covenant Brethren Church has been able to help many who have lost much. We are grateful to God for moving people to give us the means to help. There were over two hundred and fifty people killed, many still missing, homes, and buildings lost.



Interstate 26 bridge in Erwin, TN; between Johnson City, TN and Asheville, NC

Our area does not experience the dangers of hurricanes, so this recovery is new for us. But it has allowed us to minister to our neighbors. We mainly worked in four areas: Asheville, Linville, and Poplar, all in North Carolina, and the Nolichucky area of Tennessee. We also helped individuals and Churches in other areas, but the four main areas became distribution sites for us.

I visited the home of one of our church members, a couple with three children, who live in hard-hit Swannanoa, NC. The flood water got up to around eight' at their home, they were fortunate to get out alive. Samaritan's Purse came in and for the most part, gutted out their home preparing it for rebuilding. No doors, no windows, no plumbing, no electricity, etc. We have been helping them rebuild and hope that they will be back in their home soon. Thanks to your financial gifts, this is happening.

In Asheville, the loss of life is tremendous. Parts of that city are gone, and I do not know if they will ever be able to rebuild some areas. In other parts of the city, it will take time, but what has been accomplished is amazing.

Electricity is coming back faster than expected. In the mountains, many homes are still using generators. For some places, it might be through the winter before they get electricity and fresh water, but the work continues. Some of the roads need major repairs, and some are destroyed. We have provided stoves, propane heaters, and generators. Our Camp Carmel has been working in the Linville area to be a distribution site for the surrounding area.

Jackson Park used Pastor Jeremy Dyke's front yard as a distribution site for several months. Jeremy is still working with a long-term recovery group in Tennessee. With the help of other Churches, and federal, state, and local governments, the site was working quickly to provide supplies, showers, hot meals, and spiritual help.

Thanks to your help, we have been able to provide for the needs of many people. The recent flooding has created many challenges, but also opportunities to minister to those in need. To date, the Southern Region has given \$64,598.03 to help the victims plus donated goods and time. Thank You for all who have prayed and given to make this work possible! One of the first items that we provided was Bibles. When we heard the story of a Pulpit Bible that was pulled out of the river, waterlogged, but still intact from a local Church that was destroyed. We realized that many have lost much, including their Bibles. We have given out nice leather-bound Bibles for preachers, Bibles for adults, teens, and children, and read to me Bibles for toddlers.

God turns disaster into hope. We serve a mighty God!

Submitted by Pastor Scott Kinnick – Southern Region's Regional Elder