



September 28, 2020

Dear Cokesbury Friends –

**The Apostle Paul reminds us in *Philippians 4:6-7*:**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

As I write this letter I am holding each of you in prayer as together we center our faith, hope, and love in Christ. In the midst of the aftermath of Hurricane Sally, I pray this note does not bring anxiety to you but instead lifts your spirit, and gives you hope, as we acknowledge the phrase – God Is Good.

I want to take a moment to give you an update on Cokesbury's campus after Hurricane Sally. Many of you may be aware, we have sustained significant damage to the interior and exterior of our buildings and due to the nature of this emergency, moved quickly to prevent any further damage to our campus.

I believe in as much transparency as possible and wanted to provide you with a brief summary of the areas which sustained the most water and storm damage:

- All Roof Systems
- Air Conditioners
- Sanctuary and Balcony
- Atrium
- Most Classrooms
- The Loft (Student Ministry area)
- Activities Building: due to the damage sustained in the activities building the Cokesbury Children's Center (CCC) is unable to continue the after-school program.
- And more....

As you may know, damage and claim assessments like these are ongoing and will most likely take weeks to complete. Within the past week, we have had to move quickly to hire the following teams:

- Guy Brother's Roofing
- Michelson Construction Company
- Addison Riley for the removal of wet carpeting, wet wall board, and wet furniture to prevent any mold.

*According to our insurance claims adjuster and contractors the entire building restoration will take up to four months and quite possibly longer.*

*Bring Christ to people and people to Christ*

I know this is a lot for our community to process. YET, even in the midst of two named storms - Hurricane Sally and COVID-19, God continues to lead, and guide us. It is through your continued generosity to the community of Pensacola, the carefree giving of your gifts, your unbiased love for those around you, that these established, well known, and well-respected businesses desire to come along side of us to make our campus better than ever.

In all honesty, this next sentence is so very hard to write. Until further notice, we will continue to postpone our in-person sanctuary worship as the vital roof system, the Sanctuary, and the Atrium are restored. As the trustees and a smaller group of people serve together during this restoration process, I pray that you will remember:

Do not be anxious and do not be discouraged - GOD IS GOOD.

In *Isaiah 43:19* God says:

*I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.*

Therefore, Beautiful People of God – we have a deep faith in a God who transcends all understanding and walks with us every step of the way. In the days to come, I promise to keep you updated and also invite you to:

- Join our faith community in praying *Philippians 4:6-7* and *Isaiah 43:19*,
- Meet, join, or lead a small group, or Sunday School class,
- Make your way on campus to say “hello,”
- Share our sermon podcast, livestream, and eNews,
- Write notes of love and hope to the staff team and each other,
- Commit to attend one or all of our events and bring a friend,
- Volunteer and serve whenever and wherever possible,
- Share the love and hope of Christ with everyone you meet.

Please know, I want to hear from you! If you have any questions call, write, or come meet with me on campus. As you will see from the enclosed October schedule – we continue to strive as a faithful, hopeful, and generous congregation to *Bring Christ to People and People to Christ*. Together, let us *Connect* People to God, *Grow* in our Faith, and *Serve* God Together as we weather these storms and celebrate a God who says *I am about to do a new thing*.

You are loved.

With much gratitude –



Rev. Sheila Bates, Lead Pastor

*Bring Christ to people and people to Christ*

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