

Report of Mary Brunet:

DATE: October 21, 2017

TO: Norm Hardin, Emergency Disaster Coordinator

FROM: Mary Brunet, Business Administrator

Re: Report for FUMC Response to CA Wildfires, beginning Oct. 9, 2017

October 9, 2017

Approximately 2:30am Geoff and I arrived at the Montgomery campus after being evacuated from our home, and were met by the Charlie Fields family and Elizabeth Walton. We all arrived at approximately the same time and opened the Fellowship Hall. Shortly thereafter Sharon and Larry Wright arrived. I decided to turn on the office lights, sanctuary and exterior lights so others would know to come to the church. I figured since we were on the same block as the hospital, we would have an indication if we were to be evacuated. We found some flashlights, set up a radio and made a call to Shelly Albertson to indicate she could come to the church. Bob and Shirley Cheal arrived at the church.

Approximately 3:30am I tried to call the fire department to let them know we could be used as an evacuation center, but getting no answer, called KSRO radio station. I was patched through to the on air-host and made an announcement that FUMC was open as an evacuation center. Very shortly after that announcement, people started coming in. Elizabeth ran the kitchen and started making coffee. Bob Cheal designated one of the preschool classrooms as a Pet Center with access to the fenced in play yard. We posted signs on the main exterior doors and in Fellowship Hall that indicated the name, address, phone number, Wi-Fi network and password for the church so people could let others know where they had evacuated to.

Approximately 4:00am Elizabeth left to buy food for breakfast. I texted Pastor Blake Busick to let him know that we had opened up the church. He, Peggy and his parents had gone to the Finley Center evacuation location, but eventually made their way to the church. Pastor Lindsey Kerr had also been notified and she made her way to the church also. Tom and Linda Morrissey, Marty and Cheryl Murdock, the Robisons, the Fields, Paul O'Rear also checked in. Several Fijian families arrived either alone or with their care recipients. Special accommodations were made for elderly clients that needed special care. The Red room, Orange room, and downstairs preschool rooms were all in use as quiet rooms. Bea and Wanda Harris arrived and were comfortable in the Susanna Wesley House. A wheel chair was borrowed from the sanctuary and I brought over a walker from the SWH for a woman who had twisted her ankle.

Approximately 6:00am I took some photos from the parking lot of the Fellowship hall which showed an orange glow in the northern sky. Periodic booms and pops were heard which we figured

were electrical transformers or propane tanks exploding. Elizabeth and Linda had mobilized the kitchen and were serving breakfast to approximately 75 people.

Approximately 9:00am Geoff and I left the church to check on our house.

Approximately 11:00am we returned to the church and by that time a volunteer was manning the phones and other administrative structures were in place to guide donations, communications, contact church families and get people checked in. For a brief time, the sanctuary was used designated as a quiet area where people could rest or pray.

October 10, 2017

My parent's RV was parked in the driveway of the SWH to be used as a temporary shelter. Doug and Shelly Albertson stayed there a couple nights while evacuated from their home. The RV will be removed by Oct. 28th. I went in to the office to submit the payroll, and Janin prepared and completed the weekly check run. Check signers came in to sign checks. The money counters arrived and counted the cash from Sunday. A bank deposit was made.

I had a phone conversation with Diane Wikse regarding estimating hours for the preschool staff for payroll, and we discussed closing the preschool for the remainder of the week. Ultimately the preschool decided to reopen on the dates similar to other public schools in Santa Rosa.

October 10-19th, 2017

Over the course of the next two weeks, FUMC operated as a functioning shelter for many people in the church family and community. From an administrative perspective Blake, Lindsey, Doug, Janin, Jacob, Elizabeth, Norm Hardin mobilized volunteer crews from our church family, the community, and the Cal Nev Conference. Janin worked many extra hours to ensure that deposits were made and administrative processes were in place to handle, cash, check and online contributions to a Fire Relief fund. She worked with Blake and Doug to create a process for cash distributions. She, Lindsey and Ariel Muirhead were instrumental in posting updates and communications to social media platforms. A mailing was sent Tuesday, Oct. 10 asking for people to check in. While traffic through the church ebbed and flowed, by Thursday, Oct 19th most evacuations had been lifted and the shelter had all but closed up. I was not around much as I was tending to the immediate needs of my family as a result of the loss of our home.

A deep cleaning of the Montgomery kitchen and carpet cleaning of the Fellowship Hall, Library, stairs, Main Hallway and the church offices has been scheduled for October 27th.

To date 25 families in the church family (constituents and members) had lost their home or business.

Report of Elizabeth Walton:

The wind was howling... I couldn't sleep. As it turned out, my sleeplessness was a blessing as I was able to quickly answer an emergency call for help. At 2:35am, on Monday, October 9th, I received a text from Vanessa Fields stating that her family was evacuating their home and asking if the church was open. I jumped out of bed and responded that I'd be at the Montgomery campus within 10 minutes.

Upon my arrival at the church, I was met by the Fields family and Mary and Geoff Brunet, who had also been evacuated. Cars were streaming down Montgomery Dr. and several of our church family and additional guests pulled up looking for refuge from the smoke and fire. Mary and I quickly took stock of emergency supplies such as flashlights, gallons of water and food on hand. Mainly, these items were located in the Preschool shed and it was good to know what was available should it be needed.

By 3:30am, the coffee was flowing, the radio turned on and prayers were being spoken. Not knowing the severity of the fire, I took the opportunity to return to my home to gather my children and animals and take them to my mother's house. On the way back to the church, I searched out an open grocery store and stocked up on breakfast items to enable us to feed those who had gathered.

That first meal, we served upwards of 80 people. As the hours passed, daylight broke, and more people came to seek shelter, it became clear that FUMC was indeed called to be a church that serves the city.

That day, we served our community not only with hot meals, but also with safe shelter and a calm presence. Over and over, I received heartfelt thanks that we opened our hearts and doors while welcoming everyone without question.

As evening approached, it became even more evident that we were in for a long battle. Zero containment was being reported and though some people had found friends or family they could stay with, we still had over 100 people requesting to remain with us. After dinner, a call was made to members of the church and within a matter of minutes, there was a steady stream of pillows, blankets, and air mattresses which enabled us to accommodate our guests overnight. Every nook and cranny of our church became a place to sleep. There were people (and animals!) in every room of the main building, Sanctuary, Chapel and Susanna Wesley House. We all went to bed with heavy, but grateful hearts.

As the firestorm raged on, the generosity of our community ignited. Donations of food, toiletries, money, clothing, pet items and water were overwhelming. These personal offerings as well as those from local companies made it possible for us to not only feed each person three meals a day, but to provide a bit of creature comfort to our new friends and family who fled their homes with little to no belongings.

In the face of a historical disaster, our church has been a beacon of light. Every single member of our staff, lay leaders and an army of volunteers jumped into action to create a safe haven. Never before have I felt so proud to be a member of First United Methodist Church. Each one of these people was, and will continue to be, the hands and feet of Jesus in a damaged world.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Walton

