

From Andy Burnett, pastor of New Orleans and Covington, Louisiana; and Laurel, Mississippi, congregations:

As of today, Friday September 16, we have accounted for all but two brethren from our three congregations. The restoration of the essentials—power, gas and potable water—is happening ahead of schedule in most communities, although many of the outlying rural areas are still without power. Thankfully, all of our brethren who are without power have generators and access to gasoline to run them.

Last Sabbath we were able to hold two services, one in Covington (42 present) and one in Houma, Louisiana (8 present). Several of the brethren mentioned how they appreciated with greater understanding the spiritual anchoring we receive by being able to convene every Sabbath with one another, something we all too often take for granted. Our New Orleans congregation has been forced to temporarily relocate to a hall in Luling (on the west bank of the Mississippi River, southwest of New Orleans), but tomorrow we will be able to hold services in all three congregations, since power is now restored at our hall in Laurel as well.

Regarding the condition of our members' homes: at least five homes were flooded, maybe seven. In addition, almost all of the brethren in our congregations who live in Covington and New Orleans and eastward through Mississippi incurred some type of damage to their homes or property, be it from fallen trees or wind damage. The clean-up efforts are colossal, but the brethren are up to the task.

As our elder, Rick Avent, mentioned in a previous update, our members are beginning to receive financial aid through FEMA, Red Cross, and insurance benefits. The process of obtaining funds, as you have seen on the news, is not without its red tape and many are falling through the cracks. Because of your donations, though, we have been able to provide emergency assistance to meet brethren's immediate needs as well as other needs that would have otherwise been unmet. On behalf of our three congregations, thank you for your generosity. The brethren down here feel very blessed through all of this.

Andy & Lisa Burnett