

Hurricane Helene Recovery Project

Good Morning – it is my pleasure to give you the final report from St. John's Hurricane Helene Recovery and Renovations Team.

As you know the sanctuary roof was peeled back by the 100 mph straight line winds that came when Hurricane Helene hit the Augusta community early Friday morning, September 27th. We were fortunate to get someone out to put a tarp on the roof pretty quickly but before that happened there was significant damage to the Steinway piano, the ceiling, walls, organ console and flooring. Our insurance is with Brotherhood Mutual and in the previous year the deductible specifically for wind damage was increased to 1% of the property value – our Church complex is valued at about \$12 million. So our deductible for the wind damage was a little over \$120,000. This number and the uncertainty about what insurance would cover cast a somber start to our recovery process.

The Leadership Board voted in their November 2024 meeting to create The Hurricane Helene Recovery and Renovations Team. The Hurricane team reports to the Leadership Board. The team was approved at our Charge Conference shortly after that. We had our first meeting later that month and I was asked to be the team leader. The team includes: myself, Judith Goodwin, Pat DeLoach, Charles Piercy, Millie Huff, and Leadership Board members Charles Dixon, Greg Capers, Rich Bias and staff members: Tim James, Beth Dixon and Rev. Jenny Anderson.

The immediate priority was to get our roof replaced as soon as possible.

We knew this was going to be a relatively long term project and there was a huge demand for contractors all around the

community. Since we had already engaged Penn Roofing to do some repairs prior to the hurricane and getting someone out to even get an estimate was a challenge we decided to go with Penn Roofing for the roofing replacement. The sanctuary roof was a little over \$101,000 and insurance paid all but about \$3700 of that. We had to add a water and ice shield and that was not covered. Additional roof work was done on the Fellowship Hall and there were various gutter repairs/replacements for a total of \$7,325 paid by insurance. The Archway slate roof was replaced for an additional \$22,975 with insurance only covering \$800 of that expense. We replaced some additional gutters for \$8400, with insurance covering about \$2500 of that expense.

We moved out of the sanctuary after the Sunday June 8th service and setup in the fellowship hall – we had a crew of volunteers led by Warren Spooner moving the pews. As you might imagine moving and placing the pews was a big task – both into the fellowship hall and then when they were returned to the sanctuary a few weeks ago.

Dobson Pipe Organ Builders disassembled the organ console and shipped it back to the factory to be rebuilt. We were very fortunate that the console was the only part of the organ damaged.

We got 3 estimates for painting and Brush and Roll came in with the best price - \$64,591 and very good references – the sanctuary ceiling, walls and associated trim all had to be painted. The pews and narthex were also painted. The anticipated start date was June 12, 2025.

We got 2 estimates for replacing the flooring and chose Kirkland Flooring. The flooring installation started after the painting was wrapped up. The flooring in the sanctuary and chancel and pulpit

areas cost \$91,436 to replace and insurance covered that. We replaced the water damaged carpet in the balcony with hardwood for \$38,000 and insurance only allowed about \$900 for cleaning. We felt it would be best to replace the flooring with hardwood.

There were several smaller scale things that had to be addressed: there was a leak somewhere in the Church that had been very elusive to locate – Tim James, our facilities manager was instrumental in finding and repairing it – this cost about \$1000 but at one time we were facing several very unpleasant scenarios. We replaced the smoke detection system in the sanctuary for \$2,250. And finally our brass candlestick holders were damaged. We have about \$1900 from insurance to cover that expense.

As I mentioned the Dobson Company has the organ console and is repairing that in their shop – we expect that to be installed later this month – for a cost of \$38,000.

Our Steinway piano which was over a hundred years old was replaced with a Steinway C Piano for a cost of \$209,956 and that was covered by insurance. Our original piano was underneath an open area of the roof and it took on quite a bit of water during the storm. As it turns out the piano was put together with water soluble glue so it was considered to be a total loss. We had discussions about whether we should try to repair the piano and after getting advice from several piano ‘experts’ decided that it was not worth considering. We balanced our decisions with what insurance would pay and the best solution for our historic sanctuary – we were making decisions with a 100 year horizon. This approach applied to all of the work we were doing.

We had 104 donations totaling \$156,246 that breaks down in the following ways:

2 donations for Steinway replacement \$2,325

4 donations for Organ Fund \$11,950

We received 2 grants totaling \$55,000

3 churches sent us donations totaling \$3,806

32 members gave \$84,930 (this includes piano and organ donations)

44 of the donors were from outside of our congregation

Total amount received from our insurance company:

\$163,199 for hurricane recovery

\$214,338 for the new Steinway piano

\$41,914 for organ repair

Giving us a total from Brotherhood Mutual of \$419,451

We expect the final total for all repairs and equipment to be about \$625,000.

We had incredible support from our members and the community!

In closing – the entire team spent a great deal of effort and deliberation to make what we considered the best decisions for St. John United Methodist Church. As with any project of this size there are folks that went above and beyond our expectations. Beth Dixon (our operations coordinator) and Tim James (our facilities manager) did a tremendous amount of work to help us get this done. Beth got to know our insurance folks quite well and that helped us tremendously – if you get the opportunity please let them both know how much we appreciate everything they did.

Thank you for your support!