

May 21, 2010 Update on Pastor Bernard and Haiti

- * A Sea Container has been shipped with Orphan Grain Train. (The Container is carrying food and supplies)
 - * A Second Sea Container is being packed by Orphan Grain Train and will ship shortly. (The Container is carrying food, supplies and 400 French hymnals)
 - * Pastor Bernard is sleeping in his house once again. People from his congregation are still staying in tents on his property.
 - * His wife, Margaret, and his three children will remain in Brooklyn, New York, until the school year is completed. They are scheduled to return to Haiti on June 30.
 - * Worship services are being held inside the Sanctuary once again. On Sunday, May 9, 424 people worshiped at Good Shepherd.
 - * School is back in session and the students and teachers have returned to their classrooms and buildings. However, only half of the student population is in attendance. Due to the earthquake, families have relocated. Pastor Bernard hopes that attendance will increase once the new academic year begins in the fall and people return to the area.
 - * The feeding program continues and has been a tremendous blessing.
 - * The outside perimeter wall which surrounds the Sanctuary and School is almost rebuilt.
 - * The pews for the sanctuary of Village of Peace have been constructed and will be installed in the upcoming weeks.
 - * Clean up has begun in the city and will continue for many years.
 - * The city of Port-au-Prince is becoming more stable.
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Update from Pastor Bernard - February 19, 2010

Here is a summary of recent e-mails received from Pastor Bernard:

- * "I am doing pretty good, but I'm dealing with headaches, allergies, and a cold from sleeping outside every night."
- * His wife, Margareth, and his three children have arrived safely in Brooklyn, New York. They will begin attending a Lutheran School in the area next week and the tuition costs are being covered. We thank Dr. David Behnke, the Atlantic District President of the LCMS, for attending to this matter.
- * "I am very busy with a medical team from the USA. There are still so many people who are in need of medical attention. The doctors and the nurses are working very hard to serve them. The first day we treated 100 people. The second day we treated 185 people. The third day 205 people. Tomorrow we anticipate 200 people."
- * Regarding the money that has been wired down, he writes, "Thank you so much for your generosity and love."
- * He said that he is receiving food from LCMS World Relief and Human Care.
- * He has been to the Dominican border twice to purchase food and supplies.

* He continues to feed the members of his congregation and the surrounding community on a rotational basis.

* He writes, "When I get to Indiana we will discuss our rebuilding plan, how we will assist teachers during this time of crisis, and our plans to distribute food to people at least once a month."

* "Please say hello to everyone and tell them that Thomas is fine."

February 2, 2010: E-mail & Phone Call Updates

Over the last couple of days, Heart 4 Haiti has received several e-mails and phone calls from Pastor Thomas Bernard. Here is a synopsis:

* The first wave of aid from "Heart 4 Haiti" has been received by Pastor Thomas and the food and supplies are being distributed.

* The second wave is being sent down this week.

* Pastor Thomas' wife and 3 children are leaving for Brooklyn on Wednesday, February 3. Please pray for their safe travel.

* A large mass of people are sleeping in front of Pastor Thomas' home and he is trying to care for their needs.

Here are some excerpts from his e-mails:

E-Mail #1

Hearty greetings to all of you,

We are doing well today even though our hearts are filled with stress and sadness. Yesterday I went downtown to see in what condition Margareth's (his wife) car is. When I saw it I just thought of Margareth's death. The car is completely smashed; if she were there one minute before she would have been killed, but God saved her. She was not in the car when a roof of a house fell on it. Alleluia, praised is the Lord! (See the pictures below)

May God continue to bless the people for your love and support for us down here. I know that the people up there love us so much and sometimes I ask myself why do they love us in such a way. Finally, I have realized it is because they love Jesus.

Thank you for everything and may our gracious God continue to be with us all! Thomas.



E-Mail #2

Good evening,

I pray that this note finds you well. We are so so and things are still the same. The country is very filled with dirt and in some places it smells very bad. Our hearts are still very devastated. We go to our little tent at night, but we cannot sleep. We are still afraid of the aftershocks. Even though God is watching over us we do not completely feel confident. This is a lack of faith. In your prayers ask God to increase our faith.

Thank you so much for your concern and your love for us down here.

Good night and may our risen Lord watch over you,
Thomas.

Earthquake Relief Update from Rev. Kessa, President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti
01/27/2010

Dear brothers and sisters,

These past days and hours have been filled with hope because of your prayers, love, encouragement, and financial support. Two major earthquakes and multiple tremors continue to impact southern parts of Haiti. Presently we have the following update for your continued prayers.

- a. 3 Medical mission teams are involved with care and support. Several groups are trying to organize to come. All available ELCH leaders and members are working closely with medical personnel from the United States.
- b. LCMS World Relief and Partner Church Executives have visited and have future assessment teams planning to assist.
- c. 3 Mission teams have connected and are planning to assist with "hands-on" relief efforts as needed.
- d. 35,000 pounds of rice, 2,600 pounds of beans, water, salt, oil, and paper plates are being prepared for shipment and distribution within the next 7 days. They will be divided between Jacmel and Port au Prince communities.
- e. Flash lights, satellite phones, batteries, and tents, have been delivered and more are on the way.
- f. Contributions and grants totaling over 40,000.00 have been contributed to relief efforts through the ELCH. Praise the Lord.
- g. Worship services, memorial services and funeral services continue on a daily basis.
- h. An assessment of member and leader loss is in process.
- i. Evaluation of church, school, medical clinics, and orphanage buildings in process by each pastor.
- j. ELCH pastors and their families are sleeping outside on the ground. Pray for safety and support.
- k. All pastors and immediate family members accounted for.
- l. Many teachers, students, lay preachers, and staff have lost their lives. Count underway.
- m. Airport in Port au Prince still closed to domestic flights. All air transportation is coming through the Dominican Republic.

This is just a short update to keep each one of you informed. Please do not stop praying for our country and church. Our pastors and lay leaders want to keep Christ' message of hope alive in the midst of so much devastation. We praise God for you, especially right now!

President Kessa

Relief Effort Kicks Into Full Gear (January 26, 2010)

Recent contact has been made with Pastor Bernard via e-mail and a phone call. Here is the latest update:

- * People are still hungry and thirsty, as relief supplies are still not reaching everyone.
- * Some people are resorting to eating dirt to survive.
- * Pastor Bernard met with the LCMS World Relief Assessment Team over the weekend and aid is on the way to Haiti. He is grateful for their ministry of presence and their acts of mercy.
- * In the interim, Heart 4 Haiti Lutheran Mission Society is helping Pastor Bernard to purchase rice, beans, water, and tents in the Dominican Republic and then distribute them to the members of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and members of the community.
- * Also, his wife and children will be heading to New York City to live and attend school there. Heart 4 Haiti is going to help defray those costs.
- * Pastor Bernard would like to thank everyone for their prayers and financial support.

Trinity Receives Second E-Mail from Pastor Thomas (January 23, 2010)

Greetings,

I thank God for this new day. Each day we see in Haiti is a blessing from God. The quake is not gone yet. Aftershocks come every day in a timid way and we are told that it will be like that for at least one and a half months. We are also told it will not be as dangerous as the first one but we still need to be careful. We still are not sleeping inside the house.

Today some of the banks will open and people will have access to some money. Thanks be to God. Some of the leftover stores are opening their doors timidly and are very helpful.

Last Sunday we worshipped with an attendance of 50 to 60 people. The majority of them did not know if we would have service that Sunday since we are forbidden to go inside the church. We met in the yard of the church to praise and give thanks to God for his deliverance on this terrible situation. We brought words of encouragement to them. We used the whole Liturgy like in the past. There was no difference in the service, except that most of the people were crying, weeping. Sometimes I needed to stop a little bit, let them finish with their emotion, and then continue. It is normal for us to cry as human beings. Some of the members of the church have been evacuated to the provinces until the situation calms down.

Concerning the needs of the people, it is difficult to tell how much money we need to help them. It is not only the members of the church who are in need; but the neighborhood and the community. Even in the past with the hurricanes, we served not only our members but also the people of the community. It is the same for today.

Besides the wall of the church that was completely destroyed, the feeding program is the top priority now. Let us feed those people who are starving now and then we can rebuild our wall.

PS: The church is not destroyed as some people keep asking. The church at Village of Peace is safe even though there are some minor damages like in Delmas 75. My house also, it is not destroyed. We are physically weak and stressed; our heart is filled with sadness, but we have the Word and the Sacraments.

I love you all,
Thomas.

Trinity Lutheran Church Receives E-Mail from Pastor Bernard

On Thursday night, January 21, Trinity Lutheran Church received the following e-mail from Pastor Bernard:

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you all!

Thank God for His love and mercy upon us. No matter how things are down here, God is love.

I finally found the possibility to reply back. I have not had access to the internet since the earthquake that has destroyed the city of Port-au-Prince and some other places. Communication is really difficult now.

My family and I are safe: We were all in the streets when it happened last Tuesday. I thought Noah and I were going to die since we were in the truck on our way to pick up Quincey and Christina. It looked like a very big and tall wall was going to fall on us. The Divine Hand was there. A house where Christina was fell down. Margareth was taking some college classes and escaped from the Faculty building before the building collapsed and smashed her car, but God spared her life. I do not know how come God so loved us in this way since we are sinners. The wall/fence of the church fell down. Some of the members are terribly hurt and a couple of them died. Port-au-Prince is gone and so are the people. They are talking about 200,000 killed, but I think the actual number is higher. More people have died according to us.

No one is sleeping in his home because the aftershocks are still there. Every day we feel it.

We are trying to assist our members and the people of the community. I know that you have done so many things for us already but we still need many things to help the people. Do what you can to help us saving those who are still alive.

Let's say "THANK YOU GOD" TOGETHER!

Have a nice evening and may God continue to be with us all!

Pastor Thomas.

January 16, 2010 - Pastor Thomas Bernard Calls the Ahlemeyer Family

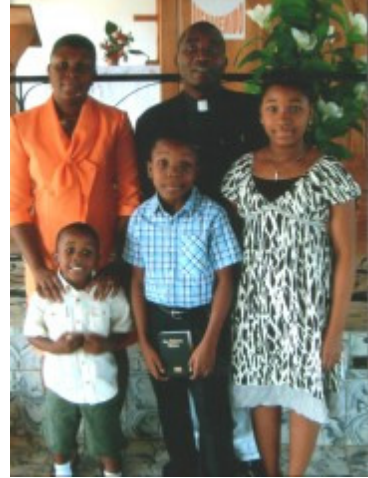
On Saturday, January 16th, at 9:00 PM, the Ahlemeyer family received a phone call from Pastor Thomas Bernard. He said that he is safe and his family is safe, but he was very sad and grim.

Pastor Thomas stated, "I have never seen anything like this before. Haiti is no more. We are hungry. My children are very scared. Today I had to walk many miles to get one gallon of water for my family and for Roro's family. (Roro is principal at Good Shepherd Lutheran School.) Roro is staying with us. He and his wife were in their house when the earthquake started but they were able to escape before the house collapsed. Margaret (Pastor Thomas' wife) was at a faculty building, but she was able to get out before the building collapsed onto her car. Two members of the church have died. Everybody sleeps outside. There are many robbers. There is no gas, power, or electricity. My house was not damaged. The church had one outside wall fall down. Tomorrow we will have church outside of the building in the courtyard. We will not go back into the church yet. This is Matthew 24... These last things."

January 15, 2010 - Pastor Bernard's Family is Safe

Rev. Markey Kessa, President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Haiti, was able to make a short telephone call early this morning to Rev. S.T. Williams, Pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Los Angeles, CA. Pastor Ahlemeyer spoke to Pastor Williams around 11:30 am this morning and heard the good news that Pastor Bernard's family is safe. No news has been reported regarding the status of Pastor Bernard's home. Pastor Kessa reported that the situation is tragic:

- * Port au Prince and Jacmel are in ruins
- * Over 100,000 are feared dead
- * 3/4 of the population are sleeping on the streets
- * No electricity or water
- * At this point the Lutheran pastors have no idea how many congregational members or school children are dead
- * The Lutheran pastors are busy going from church to church holding prayer services and funerals
- * Pastors and church members are trying to keep the injured and the suffering alive until medical care arrives
- * The needs are overwhelming. Pastor Kessa closed by saying, "Pray and bring assistance immediately. Please."



Please click on our "Earthquake Relief & Help" section at <http://www.heart4haiti.com/eqhelp.html> to find out how you can help.

January 14, 2010 - Rev. Thomas Bernard is Reported to Be Alive

E-mails from Haiti have reported that Rev. Thomas Bernard, pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Port-au-Prince, is alive. He was traveling with a Canadian mission team to his church when the earthquake hit. The e-mail states: "The ground and trees shook like a dog shaking off water. We shot for Pastor's Church and got out. The wall on one side of Thomas' Church fell into the inside down the whole length."

After assessing the damage to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and School, Pastor Bernard left to check on his family. No reports have been received since.

Also, Roro, the principal of Good Shepherd Lutheran School is reported to be alive and well. So is his family. However, his house collapsed and his car was destroyed.

We will update the website when more information is available. Please continue to keep the people of Haiti in your prayers and please consider making a contribution to help with relief efforts. Contributions can be made payable to Trinity Lutheran Church and sent to 4413 State Rd. 135, Vallonia, IN 47281.

January 13, 2010 – A massive earthquake has devastated The Port-au-Prince area of Haiti. Many structures in this area have collapsed.

As of today we have had no communication from Pastor Bernard, his family, or any other Lutheran Pastors in the area. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and School are located within the area that has had the most damage. Pastor Bernard's residence is also located within this area. As information becomes available we will update this page.

Please keep Pastor Bernard & his family, as well as all of Haiti in your prayers.

The following link from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has some info on the earthquake: <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=16376>