

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

“Ah, Lord God! It is You who have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for You.” — Jeremiah 32:17



Coordinating PCA Disaster Response in the US & Canada

Dear Partners in Ministry,

The Word has a lot to say about the hands and arms of Jesus, and about ours as well! Follow along to read about ways volunteer image-bearers have been using their hands to advance the Kingdom. Read about encouraging progress at the MNA Charles H. Jones Warehouse and Training Center in Rome GA, new tools made especially for your hands, opportunities to use your hands to help others recover by supplying relief kits, all hands on deck at recovery sites, and new teams using their collective hands to provide secure storage for displaced families. And ways to approach the Lord with open hands, something we all should do.

1 Many Hands Doth Make A Difference

John Heywood, in 1546, may have been the person that first penned the phrase ‘many hands make light work’. There is a biblical principle there, however. Ecclesiastes 4:9 says, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.”

Thank you for praying for the training room expansion project at the MNA Charles H. Jones Family Disaster Response Center in Rome GA. Your prayers were effective and the project **was successfully completed early by many hands, and under budget!** This is a major improvement for the campus and will allow us to host larger teams during training events.



The project was coordinated by warehouse manager, Mike Kenamer. Many teams tag-teamed the project including volunteers from Restoration PCA - Buford GA, Christ the King PCA - Braselton GA, Perimeter PCA - Johns Creek GA, First Presbyterian Church - Aliceville AL, and the ever-faithful MNA SecondCareer RV Ministry that did the heavy lifting. Did you know that the warehouse training center’s red accent walls require six coats of paint plus one coat of primer?



The enlarged classroom is already proving its worth, with teams receiving training there several times a month. I had the privilege of hosting members of MNA’s Executive Leadership Team there in August, just after the project was wrapped up.

Now that the project is complete, including the addition of new ginormous high definition displays, we would like to outfit the enlarged and renovated training area with higher quality and more functional training tables and seating to accommodate 40 trainees. Let me know if you would like to help fund this improvement.



Hoot, MNA Executive Coordinator Murray Lee, MNA Coordinator Irwyn Ince, MNA Ministry Engagement Coordinator Mark Casson

“Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands; yes, establish the work of our hands!”— Psalm 90:17

2 More Hands (and Buckets) Needed

After the recent disasters in Houston, we transported 100% of the flood buckets and approximately 25% of the hygiene kits on hand at the MNA John Browne Family Disaster Relief Center (the Dallas Depot) to recovery sites in Houston. I am thankful that we had the ability to respond which is an answer to many prayers; just a few years ago we were not in a position to help so quickly with the right kind of assistance.

Now we are asking you to help us restock the items and more! The directions to prepare and transport/ship these kits are available on the MNA warehouse operations website at <https://www.mnawarehouse.com/reliefkits>. Some churches organize kit-building events where the entire congregation can participate. Some small groups, youth groups, women's ministry teams, and mission teams adopt this as a regular yearly project.

Perhaps your way of helping now is by providing a financial gift that empowers the hands of depot volunteers to assemble kits on site. Our inventory goal at the Dallas Depot is 1,500 flood buckets, 2,000 hygiene kits, 1,000 children's hygiene kits, 500 bedding kits, 500 back to school kits, and 40 Sheds of HOPE kits ready to go at all times. To give a gift electronically go here: <https://give.pcamna.org/to/mna-disaster-response/>.

If you live in the Dallas/Ft Worth metroplex and wish to visit the depot and explore ways you and your friends can support the depot financially, through regular prayer, or by becoming a regular volunteer, please reach out to depot manager Rick Lenz at rlenzen@pcanet.org, he loves to give tours. To see the Dallas Depot postcard go here: tinyurl.com/3fm4jjaa.



"Then He came to Bethsaida and they brought a blind man to Him and begged Jesus to touch him." — Mark 8:22

3 Equipping More Volunteer Hands with Chainsaws

Thanks to faithful donors, MNA Disaster Response was recently able to purchase 10 new chainsaws and accessories to use at our recovery sites.

We made a good decision several years ago to settle on one primary model of chainsaw. In doing so, we easily keep maintenance parts available, e.g., replacement bars, chain loops, files, spark plugs, filters, etc., rather than dozens of parts for many different models.

Our chainsaw teams love the dependable Stihl MS362 saws. We have zero issues with these high-quality models. We also keep a few king-daddy-sized pro-level chainsaws that we use for ginormous tree trunks, and a few compact in-tree saws for times we have use of aerial equipment. The MS362 saws are the go-to saw for 90% of the normal debris clearing work we do.

The cost of each Stihl MS362 and a few extra parts is approximately \$1,200. We always have a need for replacements and to supply new teams due to this expanding ministry. If you are willing to help in this way or to fund other projects, please let us know!



"With a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for His steadfast love endures forever." - Psalm 136:12

4 Hands-driven Hammers Hammering In HOPE

A new Sheds of HOPE (SOH) team has formed at Evangel PCA — Alabaster AL. The lovely congregation investigated this important ministry by participating in training at our Rome GA campus and quickly determined this ministry would be a good fit for their congregation. They have already built several SOH kits, and are gathering tools and equipment to make their team more productive.

Some of the shed kits they built have already been deployed to hurting communities, including Summerville SC, where they were assembled and are providing storage for PCA members and neighbors after Hurricane Debby induced floodwater invaded their residences.

We knew this day would come, if God would tarry a while longer, and we were prepared to act quickly. Steve Jessen, MNA Disaster Response Specialist for the Carolinas, completed a thorough assessment and checked in with key leaders in the hardest hit areas. He then requested SOH from the Rome GA warehouse. Since Shed kits were already prepositioned at the GA warehouse, we quickly loaded the number needed and transported them to the locations in SC. While that was happening Steve also began contacting potential volunteers; fourteen men representing four SC PCA congregations gathered to assemble Sheds of HOPE kits for families in Ridgeville SC after the Edisto River, the tea-stained and longest free-flowing blackwater river in the US, rose to a near record level. One flooded family is part of Oak Community PCA; their Pastor Mark Turner and lovely congregation have been helping them through this devastating loss in their lives. Many hands working together to deliver HOPE.

To know more about SOH and how your congregation can join in the efforts, please contact Steve Britton MNADR Specialist Sheds of HOPE at sbritton@pcanet.org or call 318-348-3524. He will help you get started!



SOH Kit Builders at Evangel PCA



Flooded/ Destroyed Home



PCA Pastor Mark Turner (center)



PCA Volunteer Shed Builders



PCA Volunteers with Homeowner

"For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." — 2 Corinthians 5:1

5 Working Hands Featured in Multiply

We are overjoyed and thankful that MNA leadership thought it appropriate to feature MNA Disaster Response Sheds of HOPE in the August edition of Multiply, the flagship media resource of MNA. Please take a few minutes to watch this encouraging video.

"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I Myself will search for My sheep and look after them." — Ezekiel 34:11

"And as His servants, we do the same. We move toward others too. Because we are relentlessly pursued, especially when we not are worthy of such pursuit, we also become pursuers. We turn toward others and move in their direction. That is how the kingdom of heaven works. Sin scatters people, grace draws us toward each other. The possibilities in that grace are endless." — Ed Welch, CCEF Staff



If you are reading a digital version of this prayer letter simply click on the graphic. If you are reading the hard mail version, copy and paste this link into your browser: <https://tinyurl.com/yc4bcs78>.

"Your love and kindness are better to me than life itself. How I praise You! I will bless You as long as I live, lifting up my hands to You in prayer." — Psalm 63:3-4

Lots of Hands Pulling on Oars Required

MNA is working hard to assist the PCA in growing to 3,000 congregations by 2033, a goal revealed in 2023. This is a remarkable undertaking that sister PCA Agencies and Committees have endorsed and agreed to help accomplish. For this to happen it will require the entire PCA, as diverse as it is, to join together, all our hands pulling on all the oars in unison.

What is the need? North America is in the midst of a great religious shift. Church attendance is in sharp decline. At the same time, our communities are becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse. This shift presents the PCA with an unprecedented opportunity to impact North America. In just the last 40 years adult church membership has declined by approximately 25% in the US and Canada.

How will MNA Facilitate Growing the PCA to 3,000 congregations? By God's grace, MNA will accomplish this by:

- Planting new churches
- Reducing church closures
- Expanding diversity
- Partnering with other PCA Committees and Agencies
- Enfolding existing congregations

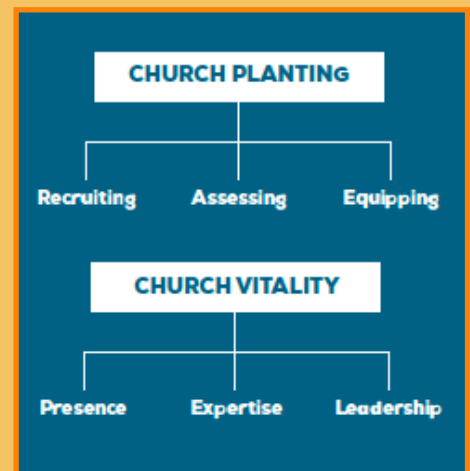
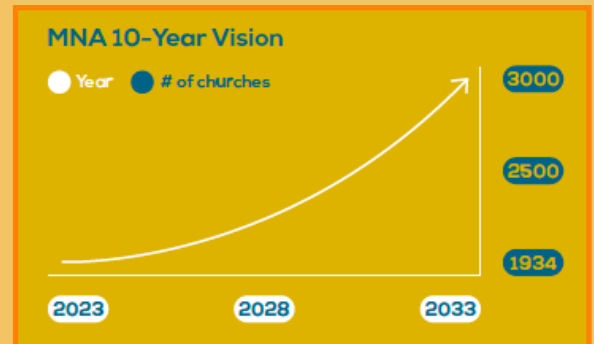
MNA provides expertise with excellence to all PCA churches, presbyteries, and networks in the United States and Canada by offering a suite of practical ministry resources — training, equipping, and assisting in missional purpose, serving communities to advance God's kingdom. MNA will increase church planter recruiting, assessment, and equipping. It will also enlarge it's role in strengthening church vitality by expanding our presence, expertise, and leadership.

MNA invites you to join in this great work!

This is a good reminder that MNA Disaster Response is but one important resource in a suite of Church Vitality ministries at MNA/PCA, but we want to do our part by resourcing and deploying God's people for Kingdom expansion. Our sister ministries include ESL, Chaplaincy, Ministry to State, Metanoia Prison Ministries, LAMP (Leadership and Ministry Preparation), Refugee and Immigrant Ministry, MNA Mercy Ministry, MNA ShortTerm Missions, etc. MNA Disaster Response is well equipped to do our part to strengthen and grow the Church. This important ministry is better equipped, better trained, better staffed, and has a larger geographic footprint than any time in the 50+ year history of the PCA. Even though this is true, to serve a larger PCA will require more even resources. Pray with us that God will provide.

As the PCA grows numerically, MNA Disaster Response will need to scale to provide even the same level of service to our beloved denomination. I know what it takes to keep MNA Disaster Response operating well today. I, too, understand what it will take to grow by 50% within the next 8-1/2 years. We will need many more regional staff in place, more training will need to happen, more equipment will need to be acquired, more volunteer mobilization, more financial resources will need to be committed, and, most of all, more concentrated prayer focus will need to occur.

You can help pull on the oars by joining us in prayer for unity and perseverance, through your financial partnership and by engaging with one or more MNA Church Planting and/or Vitality ministries.



Pray
Join us in prayer for unity and perseverance in this vision.

Give
Invest in this Kingdom mission through your generosity.

Engage
Partner with MNA ministries to equip your church for mission.

"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 16:18

7 Handled by Volunteers

Thanks to volunteers and staff, we were recently able to accomplish many seasonal tasks at the Rome Warehouse and the Dallas Depot. Each location has a regularly-serving, dedicated, experienced volunteer workforce that undertake many tasks that keep each location functioning at a high level.

Earlier this year MNA Disaster Response purchased a new-to-us Genie scissor lift for the Dallas Depot. After the purchase in south GA and minor maintenance at the Rome Warehouse, it was transported to it's new home at the Dallas Depot by Marty Huddleston, MNA Disaster Response Logistics Specialist.



The Dallas Depot has a much higher ceiling height than the Rome Warehouse and our team often needs to do maintenance while working on high ladders which is never a good thing for our team of mostly retirees. Besides tasks inside the warehouse, the lift will be used outside to access the roof of many of our mission-critical speciality trailers such as mobile bunkhouses and mobile showers which have roof-top HVAC units that need regular maintenance. The addition of the Genie band 32' lift is an answer to the prayers of our team.

Please prayerfully consider forming a small team and making the warehouse or one of the regional depots your regular mission. Your participation will play a crucial part in speeding assistance to those impacted by disasters. Reach out to Mike Kennamer to volunteer at the Rome Warehouse at mkenamer@pcanet.org or/and Rick Lenz at rlrenz@pcanet.org for opportunities at the Dallas Depot.

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." — Matthew 6:3

8 Many Hands Delivering HOPE

Sheds of HOPE are available for local crisis responses. MNA Disaster Response prepositions sheds at our Rome GA Warehouse and our Dallas TX Depot. At times, we haven't had enough sheds to meet the needs created by major disasters, but over the last few years we have proactively changed the narrative. We currently have approximately 90 Shed of HOPE kits on standby and want to make some of them available for local crisis needs when warranted.



Recently, such a need surfaced when a tragic fire took the home of Pastor Scott Dinkins of Chapin PCA in SC due to faulty wiring. MNA Disaster Response Specialist Steve Jessen who coordinates relief in the Carolinas organized a team of volunteers to transport and assemble a shed kit at Pastor Scott's former homesite. The shed is being used to store recovered belonging as the Dinkins family figures out their next steps.

Please consider hosting a SOH training event for your church team to learn how to assemble SOH and be ready to respond to local needs when they arise, whether the needs are caused by a major regional disaster such as a major flood, wildfire, hurricane or a long-track tornado where many sheds are needed, or a local house fire where only one shed can meet a desperate need and assist a family on their road to recovery.

To know more about Pastor Dinkins' current need and how to pray and give, please follow this gofundme link: <https://tinyurl.com/4zdw39e8> . More help is needed; you can do it!

To learn how many hands brought hope to the Dinkins family go the Sheds of HOPE website here: shedsofhope.com and watch this video: <https://tinyurl.com/2zrwsvda> .

"Yet You, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, You are the Potter; we are all the work of Your hand." — Isaiah 64:8



Approaching God with Open Hands (A Personal Note from Arklie)

"I will praise You as long as I live, and in Your name I will lift up my hands." — Psalm 63:4

"I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." — Martin Luther

Would you please join your MNA Disaster Response team in placing the following needs in God's hands?

- For ongoing needs presented by the current disasters season, which concludes December 1. We recently deployed Sheds of HOPE at Oak Community Church — Summerville SC after major flooding.
- For churches and individuals to send relief kits to the Dallas Depot, see section 3, above.
- For more prayer and financial partnership for the Florida Depot Project. The project is at 25% of the original goal needed to establish this needed resource. Since the pandemic, property and construction costs have risen faster than giving to this project. The PCA consists of 150 congregations in FL, some of the most vulnerable in the entire PCA, but only four have partnered; please pray for many more partners. To know more, please go here: <https://tinyurl.com/59v9tjf9>.
- Please keep praying for our expanding team who are serving you with their all. Especially pray for Mark Willett, MNADR Mid-Atlantic Specialist, who continues to battle encephalitis, and for Keith Perry, MNADR Florida Specialist, who has been in and out of the hospital for the last few months as health professionals are working to understand and stabilize his diabetes and the way it interacts with his heart.
- Please pray for your MNA Disaster Response team during our upcoming annual Staff Intensive slated for November 7-10 at the MNA Charles H. Jones Family Disaster Response Center in Rome GA. Staff will be traveling from AL, NC, TN, FL, LA, MO, TX, VA, MS to undertake specialized training to better equip them to serve you better.
- For new financial partnerships for my personal support. I believe that all organizations, churches, ministries, etc., benefit from long-serving leadership. However, maintaining longterm financial support is always a challenge and often is the reason missionaries leave the field. In my case, many supporters that began supporting me almost 20 years ago are now in the very presence of the Lord. Additionally, the cost of living keeps going up, seemingly exponentially, and reducing the value of my current support. I am seeking new partners to join my support team. I am seeking to raise an additional \$10,000 before the end of 2024. Would you prayerfully consider partnering with me so that I can keep focused on developing and guiding this important ministry?



Serving you with my whole heart,

Arklie

Arklie Hooten

MNA ShortTerm Missions & Disaster Response Director

Mission to North America / Presbyterian Church in America

Thank you for partnering with us by supporting the following ministries :

Arklie's Personal Support Fund

Disaster Response Mobilization Fund

Warehouse Operations

If you would like to mail your gift, please mark your gift for MNA Disaster Response and mail to:
Mission to North America PO Box 890233 Charlotte, NC 28289-0233

*"Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous:
'The Lord's right hand has done mighty things!'" — Psalm 18:15*