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My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I write this from Kampala, Uganda, please know that I am watching the effects of Hurricane Harvey with both horror and grave concern for all of you. Just a few moments ago, those members of our team still in country gathered to pray -- once again -- for all of you and for the most vulnerable in the city of Houston. I want to also tell you that several days ago, as the path of Harvey became clear, over 800 pastors, ministry leaders and prayer warriors from over 10 countries began to pray that we all would know the presence and the peace of God even in the midst of this incredible trial. They have promised to continue to pray for us even when the rains stop and the long recovery begins.

On the subject of our eventual recovery, please know that we are already talking with relief organizations that will allow us to mobilize our congregation to respond to the needs of our members, our neighbors, our friends and whomever it is in Houston that God will ask us to assist. In the meantime, if you do experience damage to your home, or if you can help us to know about the needs of others, please do let us know. As we are able and as we gain more information, we will continue to use email and the FPC website to keep you informed of how you can find help -- or how you can help others.

Finally, as the waters recede and it becomes safe to leave your homes, may I remind us that the greatest ministry that we might be able to share is the ministry of presence, hospitality, encouragement and assistance right in our own neighborhoods. I know that this may sound strange in this moment, but God is giving us an important opportunity to be the church.

My friends, I know that we are not even close to the end of this great trial, but I do write to remind us that even in the midst of this historic storm, God is with us and is bigger than any challenge we might face. He is with us through His Holy Spirit and as we live out our calling to be the church -- to one another -- and to others.

As you can, please keep our team in your prayers as we work to return home -- knowing that we are gathering frequently to pray for you.

Your Brother in Christ,

Jim