

Business Update: On the Ground and in Contact

“It’s been a tough year for South Louisiana,” The Rev. Canon Shannon Manning, Canon to the Ordinary of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, says. “With the Bonnet Carre Spillway infiltrating our freshwater supply, backwater flooding along the Mississippi, and the threat of Hurricane Barry, our community has been deeply impacted.”

Living in a location that frequently finds itself in the path of natural disaster has encouraged the dioceses and parishes of Louisiana to thoroughly prepare. “We think about disaster preparation all the time,” Shannon says.

She says that having a thorough disaster response plan in place can pay off exponentially. “It can bring about a tremendous peace of mind. We’re able to communicate quickly and are ready to move if something happens.”

Such was the case with Hurricane Barry.

Another Big One?

Although Hurricane Barry ended up weakening quickly and doing less damage than anticipated, the Dioceses of Louisiana and Western Louisiana were prepared for the worst.

“We sent out a text to all of our parishes through an electronic notification system used during emergencies, and we sent out an email asking parishes to make sure they have plans in place and to keep in touch. We were also able to communicate that Church Insurance was staged and ready,” Shannon explains.

That’s because Joseph Bunk, Director of Property Claims for Church Insurance, had already been in touch with Shannon. “I knew Church Insurance was on the ground, and Joe stayed in touch with us throughout the weekend when the storm hit.

“Communication is incredibly comforting,” she says. “John Scheffler (Vice President, Client Services, for Church Insurance) sent an email to check in, and just knowing the Claims department was on-site made a big difference. They let us know they were there, and we knew that they were prepared.”

Joe and Shannon were also able to have an in-person visit after the storm passed, which Shannon says is important, too. “So much of our work is done through email or on the phone. Therefore, having the opportunity for face-to-face time helps form relationships.”

A Little Prep Goes a Long Way

“We learned this through Katrina and through flooding in Baton Rouge (as a result of an unnamed tropical depression in 2016): It’s important to prepare. So, we have an extensive program in place,” Shannon says.

She and the diocesan disaster coordinator have worked with Episcopal Relief & Development to create a solid foundation that makes preparation easier for its parishes. **See what they recommend.**