Handbook for Mission Teams



Parkway Presbyterian Church

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WELCOME

Dear Mission Volunteers:

Thank you for coming to the Coastal Bend of South Texas to assist our neighbors whose lives were upended by Hurricane Harvey.

Hurricane Harvey roared into Port Aransas, Rockport, Refugio, Taft, and Victoria, Texas before stalling out over Houston and inundating that city with rain. The Presbyterian churches in Port Aransas, Rockport, and Refugio were all damaged by the windstorm. Homes and businesses were destroyed. One of our member-families had extensive damage to their primary residence in Rockport and are relocating to Corpus Christi. This is a common story: People are not staying to rebuild but are abandoning their homes which will affect all of community life, including schools, churches and businesses. Both Port Aransas and Rockport have a large seasonal population (we call ‘em “Winter Texans”) and many of them will not come back. The work to help those remaining in these communities is vital. Thank you for coming to help.

Those of us living in Corpus Christi have a twinge of “survivors guilt.” Living on the west side of the eye of the hurricane, we were spared both the devastating winds and the heavy rains. Wind speeds reach 70-80 mph which tore off shingles, broke medium-sized branches out of trees (often taking out electrical power), pushed over wooden privacy fences, and damaged store signs. This was a minor inconvenience in comparison to what happened just a 40-minute drive away. Corpus Christi residents were very lucky.

The moderate damage in Corpus Christ makes it a great “staging ground” for doing work in Port Aransas, Rockport, and other communities. Your group staying in Corpus Christi will not be a burden on anyone, and the Parkway family is delighted to open our church to be your home as you engage in the recovery efforts for our neighbors.

In this handbook you will find some basic information about where you will be staying, the amenities you will find here, and the options for your group during the “down time” of your stay.

Thank you again, for choosing to help out in the Texas Coastal Bend.

--The Members, Session and Staff of Parkway Presbyterian Church

ABout Corpus Christi, Texas

First, the name “Corpus Christi” means “body of Christ.” The bay and the city both take their name from the Roman Catholic Feast Day of Corpus Christi. It was on that feast day in 1519 that the bay was discovered by a Spanish explorer.

The city has over 300,000 residents. The majority of the population is of Hispanic descent (55%). The Roman Catholic Church is the primary religious affiliation within the community.

The city is built on the curve of Corpus Christi Bay. For those who are used to navigating cities built on a grid system that runs north to south and east to west, you may find getting around takes some adaptations! Plug in your GPS system and follow the purple line!

The economy has a large stake in the oil and gas business. You will see that as you pass the refineries along I-37 leading into the city. The Port of Corpus Christi, the Corpus Christi Army Depot, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi and Del Mar Community College are all major contributors to the local economy. Corpus Christi is a regional retail and medical center.

About Parkway Presbyterian

Parkway recently celebrated 65 years of ministry to Corpus Christi and the surrounding area. Parkway is passionate about mission work.

* The church was a founding partner of Metro Ministries, a local agency that provides a variety of services to the city’s poorest citizens.
* Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services (PCHAS) provides a variety of programs in support of children and their families. A social worker for PCHAS has a rent-free office at Parkway.
* The church has a long history of engagement with Presbyterian Pan American School in nearby Kingsville, Texas. Pan Am School is a racial-ethnic residential high school and a recipient of funding from the Presbyterian Church “Christmas Joy Offering.”
* Parkway supports three mission co-workers and has established a working relationship with an orphanage/children’s home in Guatemala.
* We also open our church to multiple 12-step recovery groups.

Parkway is located two blocks from the bay and is situated in a mid-town, residential neighborhood. You should plan on a 30-40 minute trip to your work site.

YOUR STAY AT PARKWAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Your group will stay in our Youth Center with separate sleeping rooms for men and women, a central gathering area with a pool table, ping pong table, foosball, and cable TV. Adjoining the Youth Center is Fellowship Hall that can be used for recreation (basketball) and a kitchen for meal preparation. Men’s and Women’s restrooms (both with showers) are on the opposite side of Fellowship Hall from the kitchen. We plan to have a washer/dryer hook-up early in the recovery process.

Arrival/Departure

Please plan to arrive on Sunday evening after 7:00 or anytime on Monday.

Your group should plan to leave on Saturday no later than 3:00 pm. When our washer-dryer hook-up is complete, your group will be expected to wash the bed and bath linens prior to departure.

Departure Checklist:

1. Stack all cots and mattresses and return all furniture to the place where you found it.

2. Pick up any trash in living spaces: kitchen, bathrooms, fellowship hall and youth center.

3. Take out all trash to trash bins in alley behind the kitchen.

4. Wash all dirty dishes and put away.

5. When our washer-dryer hook-up is complete, your group will be expected to wash the bed and bath linens prior to departure. Fold and returning to sleeping rooms.

Thank you for helping keep our facilities clean!

Each group staying at the church will have an assigned volunteer as a “first contact.” That individual will let you into the building, orient you to the space, and serve as the primary contact point between your group and the church. When your group leaves the key is to be returned to the first contact.

Parking and Security

There is parking on three side of the campus. Upon arrival, plan to park on Brawner Parkway at the end of the church with a sign for Fellowship Hall. After you are settled and oriented to the space you can park wherever you think most convenient.

Corpus Christi is an urban area so take the same precautions you might take in any other major city. The church is located in a quiet residential neighborhood. Although the area is safe, please do not leave valuables in your vehicles. You will probably be more of a bother to our neighbors than our neighbors will be to you!

Sleeping Arrangements

There are two sleeping rooms available. We will provide cots (30) and air-mattresses (10), sheets, pillows, blankets, towels, and wash cloths.

Meals

Your group will have full use of the kitchen. The kitchen is adequate for food preparation for a group of up to 15. It was designed to be a “warming kitchen” for people bringing prepared foods to the church for a meal. There is a four-burner range, two ovens, a commercial refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, and ice maker. If you are coming with a larger group, you may find the facilities inadequate for meal preparation. The good news is that there are a lot of nearby restaurants.

There are two grocery stores (HEB and WalMart) in close proximity to the church.

WE ARE A PEANUT FREE FACILITY. PLEASE, NO PEANUTS OR PEANUT PRODUCTS ARE TO BE BROUGHT INTO THE CHURCH. THIS INCLUDES PEANUT BUTTER AND ANY CANDY THAT MAY CONTAIN PEANUTS.

Age Requirements and Adult to Youth Ratio

Volunteers must be at least 11 years old. Volunteers from 11-17 must have a signed consent form from a parent or guardian. The ratio of adults (over age 21) to youth (under age 17) is 4 youth per adult.

The church is asking a fee of $20 per person per day to offset the increased utility, maintenance, and insurance costs associated with hosting mission teams.

Policies

* No alcohol or recreational drugs are allowed on church premises.
* No firearms are permitted in the church building or on the church grounds.
* No smoking or other tobacco use is allowed in the church building. Please move 50 feet away from the building if you use tobacco products.
* You are expected to clean up after yourselves

Working through the Coastal Bend Disaster Recovery Group

The Coastal Bend Disaster Recovery Group (CBDRG) is the local coordinating body for volunteer groups helping with disaster recovery. CBDRG is responsible for interfacing with the property owners, selecting projects for volunteers, getting the necessary building permits, determining the appropriate skill level for each project, and providing the tools and building supplies for each project.

Each Mission Team/Work Group will have a Project Manager assigned through CBDRG.

Work Group Expectations

CBDRG will expect that some groups will travel with people skilled in the building trades while other groups have willing workers but no trade-specific skills. Most groups will have some volunteers of each sort. CBDRG will try to match projects with the skill level of those in the group. If your group is working on something that seems tedious please remember that all work is vital to the recovery efforts.

Emotional and Spiritual Care

There are two parties in your work: your group and the person or family for whom you are providing services. Each side is unique.

The people for whom you work have experienced a tragedy. They will be sad for their loss and may be angry that others fared better through the storm. They will be grateful for your help and may be angry that you are in their space. Some of them will not have any religious affiliation and be suspicious that along with the work you do that you will also attempt to covert them.

The members of your group may be along as an expression of Christian love and compassion. Some members of your group may be there because they like group projects. Some members may have been coerced into coming by a friend or family member. Some of your group will experience the work as service in the manner of Jesus Christ while others will experience the tedium of eight hours of painting. We suggest that every night everyone in the group be given an opportunity to talk about a “high and low” of the day.

When you are not working

Recreation

* Go to the beach. You are on the Gulf Coast and beach access is a short drive away.
* Schlitterbahn Water Park (mid-May through mid-August).
* Hurricane Alley Water Park (June through August).
* The Ice Rays minor league hockey (September through March).
* Corpus Christi Hooks minor league baseball (April through August).
* Texas State Aquarium.
* Movie theaters, bowling alleys, city parks.

Medical Facilities

* Pharmacies near the church: CVS, Walgreens, Wal Mart, HEB.
* Drop in Clinic: The Doctors Center Wellness Clinic, 4177 S. Staples, Suite 140.
* Doctors Regional Hospital is the closest Emergency room, however should it be necessary to call 9-1-1 for an ambulance transport, the EMTs will determine which hospital ER to use based upon the diagnosis.

Eating Out

We will give you a list of nearby restaurants when you arrive.