

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

INTRODUCTION

This continuing series of project updates is intended to keep our FAC family aware of the situation and status of restoration work that is ongoing as we move toward returning to worship and ministry in our Worship Center. It is our intention to publish these updates every two weeks.

SUMMARY

Shortly after 9:00 PM on Friday, July 3rd, our Worship Center was struck by lightning. The lightning strike ignited a fire in the roof over the atrium section of the Worship Center which spread rapidly. Dispatch of emergency response agencies, initiated at 9:10 PM after the first of many 9-1-1 calls, resulted in response by more than 100 pieces of emergency apparatus, and participation by municipal, county, and state resources providing fire, emergency medical, emergency management, and law enforcement support. Responding agencies came from Burlington, Camden, Atlantic, Mercer, and Monmouth counties.



The fire was declared “under control” at about 12:30 AM on Saturday, July 4th. Although the metal roof deck confined the fire to the roof above the atrium, there was significant smoke and water damage to the entire building, including the sanctuary. FAC representatives called Belfor (Disaster Response Contractor) at about 9:45 PM, and requested that they respond to assess the situation and initiate damage mitigation as soon as it was safe to do so. A Belfor manager was on site at about 10:15 PM.

Mitigation work by Belfor started at about 2:30 AM on July 4th. Medford Township’s Construction Official was on site to evaluate the situation, and to collaborate with representatives of FAC and Belfor to plan a path forward.

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

The damage to the Worship Center included fire damage, water damage, and smoke damage. As investigation and materials testing have progressed over the past weeks, the full impact of the incident is being confirmed, and the scope of restoration work is being confirmed.

- **Fire Damage:** The origin of the fire was the location of the lightning strike, adjacent to the elevator penthouse as it intersects the west atrium roof.

The fire damaged the shingles, underlayment and insulation on the entire north-side atrium roof, all of which must be replaced. Selective replacement of adjacent areas may be required, as will repair of the steel deck that was damaged by the lightning strike and during firefighting operations.



- **Water Damage:** A huge volume of water was required to extinguish the fire. The water, which was directed at the atrium roof, traveled downward to all levels of the atrium, primarily on the north side and, to a lesser extent on the south side. The water also traveled horizontally into the sanctuary on the first level of the building, and saturated the carpet in the sanctuary. Water also infiltrated electrical conduit and devices and HVAC ductwork. Furniture, wall hangings, office equipment, musical instruments, and contents of the Treehouse were destroyed by water.

Moisture measurement, both specific to building components, and general, with regard to ambient conditions, was conducted to guide mitigation and removal of damaged material. An industrial hygienist conducted surveys of the building spaces to assess the presence and impact of smoke-borne particulate matter that will guide decontamination and cleaning operations.

All water-damaged finishes (carpet, etc.) and drywall have been removed and discarded. Furniture, equipment, and other items affected by water damage have been sorted and classified as salvageable or to be discarded.

- **Smoke Damage:** The entire building, with the possible exception of the sanctuary backstage area, was infiltrated by smoke. The smoke carried particulate matter (soot) which contaminated the surfaces with which it came into contact. This impacted virtually every horizontal and vertical surface in the building in the areas to which the smoke migrated.

An industrial hygienist has conducted and documented surveys of the building spaces to assess the presence and impact of smoke-borne particulate matter that will guide decontamination and cleaning operations, and has identified contents and building components that must be discarded.

FAC RESPONSE

- Engaged Belfor as emergency response/remediation/restoration contractor

- Began work to modify and update the Fellowship Center to accommodate Sunday worship, kids' ministry, and other FAC ministry activities
- Formed an FAC "Fire Recovery Planning Team" to coordinate restoration with Belfor and prepare and implement a plan for immediate and long-term objectives to maintain and support our worship and ministry activities.

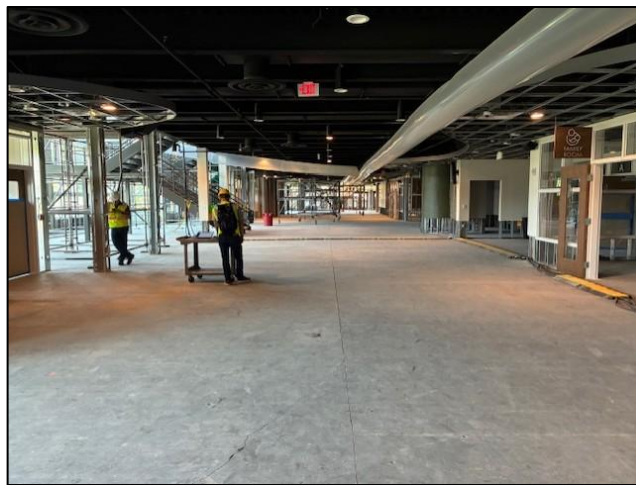
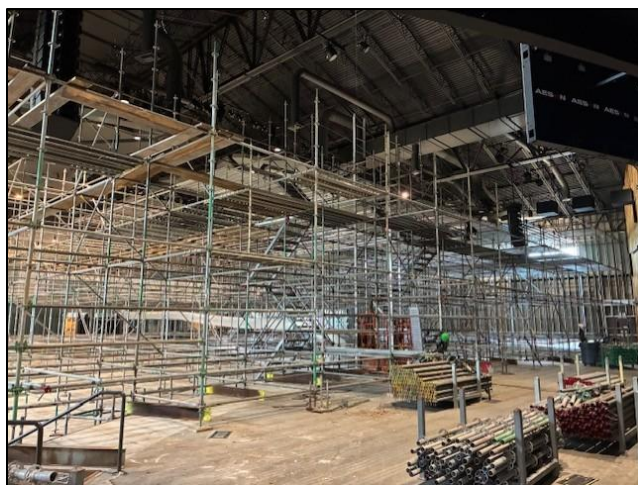
PLANNING PRIORITIES –

The team's planning priorities are driven by the our church's mission to worship and glorify God in all things, and to focus on preaching the Gospel, prayer, teaching, discipling, and building up believers, and providing for fellowship, community engagement, and service. Specific operational priorities include:

- Immediate logistical needs to support Sunday worship services, including sanctuary setup, technology, and space programming and supplies for children's ministry
- Planning to provide additional seating in the sanctuary of the Fellowship Center
- Coordination with Trinity Prep to prepare for end-of-summer interface challenges
- Planning for logistics associated with Fall ministry programs
- Identifying and addressing Ministry Director resource needs
- Identifying and engaging volunteer labor to support Fellowship Center logistics

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Belfor is preparing a detailed project schedule based on the identified scope of restoration work. That scope is just now becoming clear based on the results of testing and "up-close" inspection of building components and systems. The scope finalization will enable Belfor to develop a meaningful and reliable restoration schedule. They will submit that schedule to our team when it is ready, and we will integrate it into our comprehensive schedule that identifies the critical operations and associated milestones that are important to our ministries and operations. The schedule will be our tool to track progress, identify lags in work progress, and to find opportunities to accelerate completion of the project.



NEXT TWO WEEKS

Belfor has engaged a group of independent consultants to evaluate the status of all building components (structural steel, for example) and systems (electrical/lighting, HVAC, IT/technology, audio, etc.) to confirm extent of observable and probable delayed compromise, and is building restoration scope around that information.

Scaffolding has been erected throughout the building to facilitate the detailed cleaning that is required to remove all soot contamination. That cleaning operation will commence within the next several days.

FAC leadership will immediately issue a call for volunteers to staff a “logistics team” to assist with movement of furniture and equipment to support setup and breakdown related to Sunday worship and ministries. This assistance is needed now, and especially as we move into the Fall season. Please watch for email notifications and posts on the Church Center app and our FAC website under “Elder Updates”.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for:

- Safety of the workers on the project
- Continued unity and joy of our FAC family, and recognition of God’s sovereign plan for us as we move through this challenging season
- FAC to be a powerful witness to our community that results in opportunities to share the Gospel and lead many to Christ
- Wisdom for the Recovery Planning Team as we develop our internal recovery plan
- Rest and support for our Ministry Directors and staff as they are working tirelessly to address numerous challenges
- FAC volunteers to share their gifts and talents to support the short-term needs for logistics of worship and ministry and the long-term needs of the ministries as they are identified

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