

RESET

BEFORE THE NEXT STORM

A practical starting point for churches



1

Know your people

Identify who may need a check-in or a ride.



2

Inventory what works

Check power, supplies, space and volunteers.



3

Choose a realistic role

Decide what your church can safely sustain.



4

Verify access to help

Confirm hours, appointments and backup providers.



5

Practice and improve

Test one service and address the gaps.



Explore the church readiness report

Questions? reggie@reggiebachus.com

Church Forward • Night One • Disaster Readiness

Church Forward Night One Disaster Readiness Report

Findings recommendations and practical next steps

Mount Ollie Baptist Church | September 28, 2026

Hosted by Rev. Reginald Lee Bachus | Report prepared October 14, 2026

The central lesson

Preparation should begin with the people, relationships and resources already present in a community. The panel described how prolonged loss of electricity compounded existing hardship in Gary and how churches, neighbors and wider networks mobilized to meet needs. Their recommendations point toward organized preparation before the next disruption, with a defined role for each church and dependable support for the people doing the work.

The voices in this conversation

Rev. Nicole Patrice Guns, First Baptist Church of Gary; Rev. Eric L. Boone Sr., Tree of Life Missionary Baptist Church; and Rev. Keith D. Witherspoon, Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church and Indiana state-convention leadership. Names are standardized from the event materials because automatic captions contain spelling errors.

Five priorities for churches

- Know who will need help and how to reach them when normal communications fail.
- Choose and prepare a realistic community-service role for your church.
- Build partner relationships and resource-sharing arrangements before an emergency.
- Make aid accessible to people without cars and support volunteers who also need assistance.
- Plan for recovery beyond the first distribution, including replenishment, rest and follow-up.

How to use this report

Read the transcript-based findings, assign the first actions, then complete the inventory, context review and service-verification worksheet with your leadership team. Use the separate household companion with members and neighbors. Timestamps refer to the supplied YouTube transcript. Panelists' experiences are reported as testimony, not an independently audited disaster assessment. RESET recommendations are identified separately.

[Watch Night 1 Disaster Readiness](#)

Complete this report on screen

Type in the light-blue fields, choose dropdown values and check applicable boxes. Save or download your completed copy before closing. Use a PDF form viewer if your browser does not show the fields. Blank forms also print for handwriting.

What the panel observed

1 Existing hardship became more severe

Guns described the advantage of having a car, fuel and options to reach food or leave the affected area. Boone described food loss, blocked roads, health needs and household financial pressure. The practical lesson is to identify mobility and resource constraints before deciding how help will be delivered.

Transcript reference: Guns 11:51-15:59; Boone 18:41-21:27.

2 Electricity failure affected essential daily needs

Boone reported requests involving refrigerated medication and in-home dialysis, alongside generator scarcity and price-gouging concerns. Witherspoon described his mother's loss of food and medication. These accounts show why a readiness plan must connect power, health, transport and supplies.

Transcript reference: Boone 20:22-21:27; Witherspoon 31:39-32:30.

3 Churches served while experiencing their own losses

Boone reported generators, meals, transport, temporary accommodation and home delivery. Witherspoon emphasized replenishing food pantries whose stocks were depleted or spoiled. Relief providers therefore need operational support as well as donations for recipients.

Transcript reference: Boone 20:22-28:20; Witherspoon 33:57-37:12.

4 A distribution site does not guarantee access

Boone described mapping areas that had received less assistance and asking whether giveaways allowed walk-ups. Guns described walk-up distribution at First Baptist because not everyone had a car. Bachus raised scheduling barriers for workers and parents.

Transcript reference: Bachus 51:45-53:22; Boone 54:16-55:27; Guns 1:00:00-1:00:26.

5 Volunteers and young people had needs of their own

Boone described coaches bringing young people, asking about their household needs and involving them in service. Guns emphasized helping volunteers who were also affected and recognizing children's emotional and spiritual distress. Participation should include care for the participant.

Transcript reference: Boone 55:27-57:56; Guns 59:16-1:01:45.

Recommendations emerging from the conversation

Prepare as a network with different local strengths

The discussion proposed using existing districts, associations and state and national church networks as resource hubs. Water, clothing, space, transport and other capacities can be shared rather than duplicated everywhere. The regional-hub discussion begins around 39:30; the caption text does not reliably identify the speaker, so this proposal is attributed to the discussion rather than a specific person. Guns affirmed wider church-network assistance at 41:44-44:17.

Rev Keith Witherspoon

- Ask who monitors utility vegetation management and local infrastructure; seek answers and follow-through. His recommendation is an accountability question, not proof that a specific maintenance failure caused the outage. [1:12:03-1:13:21]
- Prepare church facilities and resources for a defined role. Different churches have different capacities; each should do what it can do well. [1:13:29-1:15:53]
- Continue cooperating after the emergency. [1:15:58-1:16:50]

Rev Nicole Patrice Guns

- Know the people who need checking on, and identify usable assets such as space, parking and vehicles. [44:24-45:58; 1:17:16-1:18:06]
- Make specific requests for funding and explore partners beyond churches. Prepare for long-term recovery. [1:18:06-1:19:26]
- Document assistance from day one, preserve dignity, and pace leaders and volunteers so they can continue serving. [1:19:34-1:21:18]

Rev Eric L Boone Sr

- Create a response team, establish contact routes in advance and prepare backup power for useful services. [46:06-51:41]
- Learn from people who have handled other disasters and revise distribution based on community feedback. [53:26-55:27]
- Thank partners, improve insurance understanding and form sister-church partnerships that continue after the storm. [1:25:32-1:29:25]

A first month of preparation

The following schedule is a RESET implementation recommendation. The panel did not prescribe these deadlines. Adjust the work to your church's capacity and local conditions.

When	Action	Evidence to retain
First 48 hours	Name a lead and backup. Select one useful service your church can realistically provide.	Names, contact routes and written service scope.
First 7 days	Create a consent-based priority check-in list and assign a backup contact method.	Restricted list; who checks on whom; test result.
First 7 days	Contact public agencies, nearby churches and potential supply partners.	Verified contact, service limits and activation procedure.
Days 8 to 14	Review facility, power, transport and supply readiness with qualified support where needed.	Capacity inventory; safety gaps; replenishment needs.
Days 8 to 14	Plan walk-up, delivery and worker-friendly access. Include volunteer needs.	Distribution plan; accessible routes; shifts and rest.
Days 15 to 30	Test one capability, record failures and select the next improvements.	Drill record; action owner; next review date.

Protect people while preparing

Do not use emergency testimony as technical instructions. Generator setup, electrical connections, shelter operations, food handling and medication storage require appropriate safety review. Verify actual capacity before advertising a church as a resource hub. Youth participation needs adult oversight, appropriate tasks and consent.

Remember the people providing care

Plan meals, supplies, rest and shift coverage for volunteers. Recovery needs can continue after power returns. Record what you can sustain rather than promising indefinite service.

Need help choosing a realistic church role or organizing partner outreach? Contact reggie@reggiebachus.com for RESET support. Start with the service you hope to provide and the gap you need help resolving.

Our first commitment

Service we will prepare

Lead and backup

First test date

Partner to contact this week

Use the expanded action plan on page 13

Inventory before buying or promising services

RESET practice guide added to the panel findings. Inventory usable capacity, not just ownership. For each category record quantity, working condition, location, owner, safe capacity, last test and replenishment route. Confirm partner commitments directly; donated equipment still needs upkeep.

Capacity	Items and checks	Purchase or partner decision
Power and lighting	Lanterns, batteries, chargers and power banks; tested equipment, operating hours and essential electrical loads.	Purchase small essentials as needed. Compare professionally assessed backup power with a verified powered partner site.
Food and water	Drinking water, shelf-stable food, manual openers, dietary options, storage containers and thermometers.	Size stocks to the service and people served. Agree on pantry, grocery and water resupply before expanding.
Health and hygiene	First-aid supplies, soap, sanitizer, toilet supplies, menstrual products, diapers and appropriate protective supplies.	Identify trained first-aid partners and referral routes. Do not promise clinical care or medication storage without qualified arrangements.
Communications	Printed contact lists, charged phones, radios, chargers, translated notices and an offline check-in method.	Buy modest backups; coordinate accessible warnings, interpretation and trusted neighborhood messengers.
Space and access	Usable rooms, accessible entrances and toilets, exits, tables, chairs, signs, parking and distribution routes.	Confirm occupancy and intended use. Partner for functions the building cannot safely support; check shelter requirements before offering overnight stays.
Transport and delivery	Vehicles, drivers, routes, fuel access, carts and accessible transport contacts.	Verify insurance, driver authorization and operating limits. Arrange delivery and accessible rides rather than assuming every van can serve everyone.
People and continuity	Lead and backup, shift roster, trained volunteers, keys, spending authority, records and household support.	Cross-train and share roles with sister churches. Budget replenishment, repairs and relief for volunteers as well as initial equipment.

A purchase passes four tests

What specific need does it meet? Who can safely operate and maintain it? What will storage, training, fuel or charging and replacement cost? What happens if the item or supplier fails? Compare owning, borrowing, renting, partnering and referring before committing funds.

Fuel-powered generators belong outdoors at least 20 feet from doors, windows and vents [S2]. Qualified review is needed for loads and electrical connections. Include battery-backed carbon monoxide alarms; never plan indoor generator use.

For help turning an inventory into a prioritized purchase and partnership plan, contact reggie@reggiebachus.com. Describe your intended service, existing assets and main limitation.

Adapt the church plan to its context

These are RESET planning prompts, not panel findings or a complete list. A church may fit several rows. Ask people what support they need rather than inferring ability, income or household circumstances from appearance or membership.

Church context	Two distinctions to check
Small church or limited funds	Choose one sustainable role such as check-ins or referrals. Use a shared lead and backup or sister-church arrangement rather than committing to continuous staffing.
Larger church or designated hub	Set a verified daily service limit and activation authority. Plan resupply, accessible queues and shifts before advertising capacity.
Rented or shared building	Confirm written access, storage and emergency-use permissions with the owner. Identify a fallback location if keys, utilities or another tenant limit use.
Church that owns its building	Review condition, drainage, essential systems and insurance with appropriate professionals. Confirm which spaces remain safe and usable after disruption.
Urban or transit-dependent area	Provide a walk-up option and an alternative if transit or elevators fail. Check whether timed pickup excludes workers, caregivers or people waiting in line.
Rural or widely dispersed area	Map fuel, water and long delivery routes. Set check-in alternatives for poor signal and name partners outside the same outage area.
Congregation with varied access needs	Ask about mobility, hearing, vision, language, sensory and cognitive supports. Keep paper and phone access alongside online forms and protect sensitive information.
Youth and family ministries	Plan supervised, suitable service tasks and caregiver communication. Include childcare disruptions, household needs and emotional support for young volunteers.
Relief team affected by disaster	Check volunteers' own food, transport and family needs. Arrange rest, relief shifts and external support before exhaustion disrupts the work.

Agree on the boundaries of service

Write down who may activate the team, which services are available, when they close and where people go next. Confirm whether each service is walk-in, appointment only, referral only or available after activation. Do not assume a partner's normal hours or capacity still apply during a disaster.

RESET can help a leadership team identify its role and coordination gaps. Contact reggie@reggiebachus.com with your church context and first three questions.

Church readiness starter assessment

Choose a status and record evidence with the date checked. Unknown means verify. This is not a certification.

Church and reviewer

Review date

1 People Who needs a check-in, transport or additional support?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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2 Communication Can we reach people if phone, internet or social media fails?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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3 Church role Have we defined what we can safely provide and sustain?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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4 Power and facilities Has essential backup capacity been reviewed and tested?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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5 Supplies Do we have a stock and replenishment plan?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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6 Partners Are contacts and resource-sharing expectations current?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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7 Access Are hours, appointment rules, walk-up access and delivery verified?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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8 Volunteer care Are volunteers' household needs, shifts and rest included?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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9 Youth and care Are youth supervised and emotional-support routes identified?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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10 Recovery Are records, follow-up owners and continued support planned?

Status	Select	Evidence and date	
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Use the action plan on page 13 to assign your three priorities. Review answers with the leadership team.

[Go to the church action plan on page 13](#)

Verify help before people need it

RESET adds this worksheet to turn the panel's partnership and accountability recommendations into a repeatable practice. It also addresses the host's later emphasis on government-service capacity. The panel did not make specific findings about DOGE or federal staffing reductions in this transcript.

Verify	Record
Provider and service	Agency, church or organization; location; named contact.
Actual availability	Normal and emergency hours; area served; capacity; activation trigger; named verifier and date checked.
Appointments and intake	Walk-in, appointment only, referral only or activated service? How to book by phone or offline? Lead time, deadline, confirmation and late-arrival rules?
Eligibility and access	Requirements; documents and acceptable alternatives; cost; language and disability access; whether a referral is required.
Barriers	Transport, disability access, language, digital access and timing.
Follow-up and backup	Request reference; escalation contact; next step if full or unreachable; alternate verified provider.
Reverification	Responsible person and next check date.

How to connect with RESET

Use the checklist with your church or household. If you want help turning the answers into a baseline report, partner map, prioritized action plan or training session, contact RESET about a scoped assessment or referral. Network participation proceeds through recommendation, approval and invitation.

RESET Resource Center on [Reggiebachus.com](https://reggiebachus.com)

Questions, a first conversation or help using these tools: reggie@reggiebachus.com. Formal business inquiries and scoped proposals can then be coordinated through reginald@yourrace.us. Completing this tool does not commit a church to a paid engagement.

[Complete the fillable provider record on page 11](#)

Source and editorial notes

Primary source: user-supplied YouTube transcript for Night 1, approximately 0:09-1:36:00. This report uses paraphrases; no verbatim quotations are required to understand its findings. Timestamps are approximate navigation references, not independent verification of the underlying events.

The transcript gives conflicting August 10 and August 11 storm dates. The exact event date, wind speed, outage extent and official weather classification need independent confirmation before appearing as settled facts. Reported relief quantities and dollar amounts also need documentation before use as audited impact totals. The report deliberately does not repeat those totals.

Accounts of price gouging, restoration disparities and limited public visibility are panelist experiences and concerns. This report does not establish a legal violation, a universal restoration policy, or a causal finding about race, party control or infrastructure maintenance. It preserves the practical questions those experiences raise.

Practical guidance sources

The inventory and context pages, action schedule and worksheets are RESET additions. They translate the conversation into planning tools; they are not a validated assessment, certification or a complete emergency plan. Local hazards, access requirements, codes and provider arrangements must be checked.

S1 [Ready.gov Build a Kit](#)

S2 [CDC Use a Generator Safely](#)

S3 [CDC Building an Emergency Kit for People with Disabilities](#)

Practical sources checked October 14, 2026. Consult the linked guidance for full instructions. A church should not assume that a shared charging location can support medical devices or refrigerated medication; confirm an appropriate clinical and power-continuity plan with qualified providers.

Using the household companion

Distribute the RESET Night One Household Disaster Readiness Guide separately. It focuses on individual decisions, housing and location differences, access needs and a manageable first week. Church leaders can use its questions to identify support needs without circulating private household information.

Verify service access and appointments

Complete one record for each provider. Recheck when emergency operations change. Keep a verified alternative.

Provider and named contact

Phone or contact route

Service and area served

Normal and emergency hours plus activation conditions

Access arrangement

How to book without internet

Earliest availability and booking deadline

Confirmation and late or missed visit rule

Eligibility documents acceptable alternatives and cost

Available access options

☐ Walk-up
 ☐ Pickup
 ☐ Delivery
 ☐ Transport

Disability access language support and limits

Verified alternative and contact if full closed or unreachable

Follow-up reference escalation contact or next step

Verified by and provider contact

Date checked

Next check date or recheck trigger

Questions or support: reggie@reggiebachus.com

Inventory and resource decisions

Record priority items or capacities. Check what works before buying. Use additional copies for more items.

Church or household

Date checked

Church categories: power, food, health, communication, space, transport and people.

Resource 1

Item or capacity

Quantity or duration

Condition

Next step

Source or partner

Owner and next review

Resource 2

Item or capacity

Quantity or duration

Condition

Next step

Source or partner

Owner and next review

Resource 3

Item or capacity

Quantity or duration

Condition

Next step

Source or partner

Owner and next review

Resource 4

Item or capacity

Quantity or duration

Condition

Next step

Source or partner

Owner and next review

Questions or support: reggie@reggiebachus.com

Church action plan

Choose three realistic actions. Name an owner, deadline, evidence of completion and a backup.

Church or household

Plan date

Priority 1

What will we do

Responsible person and backup

Due date

Progress

Evidence of completion or next step if blocked

Priority 2

What will we do

Responsible person and backup

Due date

Progress

Evidence of completion or next step if blocked

Priority 3

What will we do

Responsible person and backup

Due date

Progress

Evidence of completion or next step if blocked

Next review date

Questions or support: reggie@reggiebachus.com