

Beirut, August 17, 2020

Dear members, friends and partners of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut (NECB),

Greetings and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

First, we give thanks to God that, except for one very critical injury to an elderly member of our congregation who now is in intensive care, no lives were lost and no major injuries have been sustained amongst our church constituency.

Second, you may be aware of the extent of the damage that the building of our beautiful church in downtown Beirut (including the sanctuary, the small chapel, the multi-purpose Charles Saad Hall, the youth room, the storage rooms and the parking doors), as well as our church offices, Sunday school hall and pastor's apartment have sustained. Additionally, the Moadieh Evangelical center (MEC) for old age sustained some damage to its entrance door, to its window frames and glass windows. Furthermore, sister churches and institutions, especially All Saints Episcopal Church (a long time partner of ours) and the Near East School of Theology (NEST) where our Evangelical pastors train, also sustained general damage to their windows and doors. If you visit the Facebook pages of these institutions you can see for yourselves photos and videos of the destruction as well as the cleaning effort that has been made since Wednesday, August 5th.

Thanks to the immediate and energetic efforts of NECB's youth and young adult groups under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Rima Nasrallah, plus the help of church staff and so many friends and supporters of the church from outside, NECB was able to clean up 90% of the damage and destruction in its premises. The immediate needs of NECB now are:

1. To restore the aluminum frames of the shattered doors and windows in the church building itself, the church office, the Sunday school hall and the pastor's apartment.
2. To install new glass in all the items mentioned above.
3. To install wooden and steel doors in the pastor's residence, the church office, the Sunday school hall and the church building, in order to make them secure.
4. To restore the few church benches that were broken in the sanctuary due to the fall of the huge stained glass windows (8 meters high) and the entrance door on them.
5. To restore the false ceilings that were shattered in all the locations of NECB.
6. To restore the frame and door of the elevator in the church building which was badly bent.
7. To install new rolling shutters in Charles Saad Hall in the church building.
8. To replace the kitchen in the youth group hall.

9. To restore the shattered gipson walls in the Sunday school hall.
10. To replace the desktops, the lighting fixtures and other damaged furniture.
11. At some point in the future, the church would like to reinstate the beautiful stain glass windows that were installed in 2017 and were mostly shattered by the explosion, however, at this point in time we need funds to restore the aluminum frames of the windows which were dislocated and bent, and to install regular glass.

(Note: The priority amongst the above mentioned items is to fix the pastor's residence in order to allow me and my wife to return home since I am now staying at my brother's home elsewhere.)

Third, in spite of all the material damage that all of us have sustained, our uppermost priority remains caring for human lives, health and shelter. At the same time that we are restoring our damaged physical spaces, we have launched an aid campaign for all the people who have been left homeless or are in need of food, medicine and/or financial help. Rev. Rima Nasrallah, again, is leading the effort with the help of the young people of our church to prepare food parcels and financial aid, and to answer any need that the victims of the horrible explosion may have. Therefore, whatever donations will reach our church will be rationed between our immediate and urgent material needs as a church, as well as humanitarian needs.

Fourth, I have been in touch with Mrs. Joyce Eid, director of MEC, Rev. Imad Zorob, pastor of All Saints Episcopal Church, and Dr. George Sabra, president of NEST, in order to coordinate the distribution of funds in a proportionate, balanced and just way. I know that some donations have already come in the name of NECB, NEST and Episcopal Church together. Therefore, in consultation with the above mentioned persons, we have agreed on the following distribution ratio: 60% NECB, 10% MEC, 20% NEST and 10% Episcopal Church. Since NECB is already involved in relief work, and is receiving earmarked donations locally and internationally for this specific purpose, we shall earmark 15% of the 60% designated to NECB for relief work.

Fifth, NECB has been in partnership with the Stuttgart-based mission agency known as EMS (Evangelical Mission in Solidarity) for almost 50 years. In response to the crisis, EMS has launched a fund raising campaign and is able to receive donations under the account: "**Libanon Soforthilfe**", which will cover gifts to NECB, MEC, NEST and the Episcopal Church, and you need to mention specifically when you make a donation. Already some member churches of EMS have generously contributed to this emergency campaign. Therefore, we ask all contributors based in Germany, Switzerland or the EU who wish to help us, to use the following bank transfer information or "Spendenkonto":

Evangelische Mission in Solidarität e.V.
Evangelische Bank
IBAN: DE85 5206 0410 0000 0001 24

EMS is a charity organization recognized by the German tax authorities. Hence, German based donors will get a receipt from EMS which may be used for their tax returns.

When we rebuilt our destroyed church after the end of the Lebanon war, we chose as our motto the biblical verse from Psalm 127 that says *“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.”* More than ever before, this verse remains our motto and our source of inspiration. So, whatever you donate, you donate for the work of God ... and for the glory of God!

Thank you so much in advance for all your prayers, concerns and solidarity with us at this hour of need. Keep us in your prayers and may the Lord bless you all.

Sincerely yours,



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PS: In all cases and for all your contributions, please send an email to the church address (nec.beirut@t-net.com.lb) indicating the amount you have sent and the purpose of use, otherwise we may not be able to identify your contribution.