

Miss. Baptists continue delivering water to those in need

*By Hubert Yates
Correspondent*

I would like to say thank you to the churches and volunteers that have responded and assisted us in water deliveries and warehouse operations during the Jackson water crisis.

While there is an abundance of bottled water available at the public distribution points, very little of it reaches the elderly, homebound, infirm, etc., who cannot make it to those distribution points and in that cause, Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR) is working to meet the need.

We currently have a well-stocked supply of water for delivery. Thank you also to the Mississippi Baptist churches and individual donors that have contributed the funds needed to obtain the bottled water, and to those ministries and organizations that have made bulk donations.

Since Sept. 3, approximately 73 pallets of water – roughly 5,300 cases or 127,200 bottles – have been distributed through the combined activities of MBDR, Metro Association, First Church, Jackson, and a number of associated ministries.

The recipients have been primarily the elderly, shut-in, homebound, disabled populations in individual residences, senior living apartments, assisted living facilities, and homeless shelters.

In addition, we have supported several Jackson area churches with water for their members, public distribution ministries, and a couple of schools/colleges with needs for their students

and faculty while attending class.

There is more to do as we continue to dispatch distribution teams (preferably two-person teams consisting of husband/wife, two men, or on occasion two women) for direct delivery to the homes of those affected. We continue to need additional volunteers.

Our distribution teams leave the temporary warehouse facility at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays and at 9 a.m. on Saturdays. No deliveries are currently scheduled for Sundays.

While we typically assign four to five drop-offs per team in a geographically grouped area, it is possible for teams to do just one or two deliveries if that is what time allows.

Volunteers are reporting very good experiences with most of the deliveries as they have opportunities to pray and share the Gospel with those in need. Please share that with your congregations.

As we enter into the coming week, we will begin our second round of deliveries to individuals and locations as well as new individuals added. Most Jackson water system users have been under a boil water notice for almost two months, so the ability to have clean water available is a critical need for them.

In addition, for many organizations that are distributing water a condition called compassion fatigue will begin to affect volunteers and groups, resulting in fewer volunteers and people reached with the needed water. Volunteers are greatly needed in order to sustain the distribution.

We ask for your prayers and continued support in the days ahead. Please pray for city and state leaders for wisdom and knowledge to quickly resolve the issues; for those who are being affected that they will realize and know the fullness of the hope of Jesus in troubling times; and for the

congregations/volunteers responding to the needs of others.

At the current time, the situational need is for bulk, palletized bottled water. MBDR is seeking to obtain only bulk, palletized bottled water for use in the distribution system. Please do not conduct "water collection drives" as collection, transportation, storage, and distribution at this point are a time-, cost-, and manpower-intensive operation.

Please assist us by monetary contribution for bulk purchases, designated to MBDR-Jackson Water Crisis, online at Giving – Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (mbcb.org), or by mail at MBCB, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

These tax-deductible contributions allow us to purchase bulk delivery by tractor trailer load to facilitate handling and speed up delivery to the people who are most in need

If you are a MBDR volunteer and or member of a Mississippi Baptist congregation that desires to come alongside Metro Association and their congregations in ministry to the residents of the City of Jackson during this crisis through volunteering or contributing, and/or need additional information, please contact MBDR at hyates@mbcb.org, or by telephone at (601) 292-3334.

Yates is director of disaster relief for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Jackson Water Crisis Operation Summary (09/02 – 09/10)

- MBDR Volunteer Days: 65.
- MBDR Volunteer Hours: 394.
- Requests received: 241.
- Deliveries to Individuals: 238 (1160 cases or 27,840 bottles).
- Bulk Deliveries to: Belhaven University, Grace Homeless

Shelter, Miss. Schools for Deaf and Blind, Jackson Veterans Home, Griffith Memorial Church, and Miss. Child Protective Services (1266 cases or 30,384 bottles).

▪ Volunteers (2426 cases or 58,224 bottles):

– Baptist Student Union, Hinds Community College, Raymond.

– Colonial Heights Church, Ridgeland.

– First Church, Brandon.

– First Church, Clinton.

– First Church, Flora.

– First Church, Jackson.

– First Church, Madison.

– Grace Fellowship, Rankin Association.

– Harvest Church, Madison.

– Meadow Grove Church, Rankin Association.

– Miss. Baptist Convention Board.

– Miss. Baptist Disaster Relief.

– Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

– Ridgecrest Church, Madison.

– West Carthage Baptist Church, Carthage

▪ Deliveries by First Church, Jackson; Deliver ME; and Jackson Leadership Partnership (approximate based on reports):

– 14 Senior Living Facilities (2409 cases or 57,816 bottles).

– Individual deliveries to members in need at First Church, Jackson; City Church, Jackson; others (360 cases or 8640 bottles).