

Windstorm damage leads to flooding in San Marcos church

May 10, 2024

SAN MARCOS—When damaging storms swept through San Marcos on May 9, hail and high winds caused major damage across the city, including to the roof of First Baptist Church.

Clint Followell, the church's minister of students, reported the damage to the building in a social media post.



First Baptist Church San Marcos sanctuary, flooded by May 9 storms. (Courtesy photo)

Followell explained either straight-line winds or a tornado ripped off a portion of the roof, causing damage to the fire suppression system, which resulted in widespread flooding on one end of the building.

Pastor Chad Chaddick said they considered their prompt awareness of the damage as “kind of a God thing.”

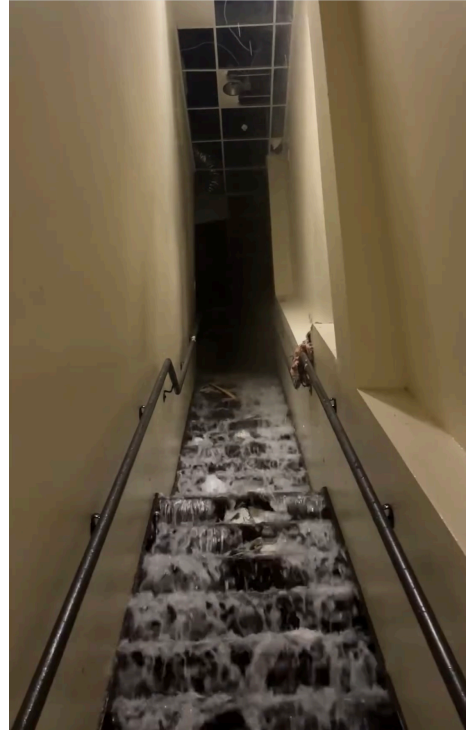
He explained the church offers space to several community groups. One of these groups, a local band, was practicing on the other side of the building in the education wing. As they were leaving around 8:30 p.m., the director of the band heard the sound of rushing water coming from the sanctuary and immediately set about notifying church leaders of the damage.

Having sustained damage at his own home, Chaddick was about to get ready for bed, when he saw the calls and texts about damage to the building and headed up to church instead.

By 9:15 p.m. he had arrived at the building and had the water turned off.

Church members sprang into action, with approximately 70 showing up to help over the course of the next hour, using push brooms or squeegees to sweep the several-inches-deep flood water out of the building, while fire alarm signals and warnings blared overhead.

Water poured down the stairs like a waterfall, with the sanctuary, administrative offices and foyer sustaining flood damage.



Flooding staircase at First Baptist Church in San Marcos. (Social media screenshot)

Servpro was on scene by 10:30 p.m. to begin professional water removal and drying services. Chaddick personally remained at the building until around midnight, while three truckloads of Servpro crews continued working into the early morning hours of May 10.

When Servpro arrived and the First Baptist crew needed to get out of the way, Chaddick said they “circled up and reminded ourselves that it’s all just stuff. Nobody’s been hurt and the church isn’t damaged because the church is the people.”

Chaddick said it was a sweet time and may have been one of the greater times of worship, coming together to serve God alongside one another.

Only a little while before the storm came through, at 6:30 p.m., a private

school in the area had been holding their end of the year concert and program in the sanctuary. Chaddick said they were grateful that by the time the storm hit, that wing of the church was empty.

While daylight was still visible the next morning through the portion of the sanctuary roof that was ripped off, Chaddick was working to get a temporary roof in place and seal off that side with plastic.

Servpro assured him they would have everything dried out enough by Sunday for services to take place, but Chaddick said they “haven’t really settled on plan B yet,” if that doesn’t work out.

Friends in the area offered to assist Followell and the church in any way they could.



First Baptist Church San Marcos flood clean-up volunteers. (Courtesy photo)

Followell said it was “going to be a long road of recovery, but Chad Chaddick’s words echo in my heart tonight: ‘It’s only stuff, only a building, and the church is not the building. We are the church.’

“And even in this, we praise the Lord.”