

Faith-Filled Stories Shine Beacon of Light as Condo Death Toll Rises to 11

The death toll has risen to 11 and approximately 150 people are still unaccounted for after Surfside Champlain Towers South building collapsed last Thursday morning. As rescue efforts continue, families anxiously await news of missing loved ones.

Amidst the disaster, stories of perseverance and faith are shining like a beacon in a dark night.

Nearly 200 strangers gathered Monday night to hold a beachside vigil, though the majority were not personally connected to the suffering families. According to a local news station, of those gathered was 23-year-old Martin Lagesfeld, whose sister is among those still missing.

And yet, he has faith and hope she can still be rescued.

"It's now the fifth day; I have not lost any hope or faith," Lagesfeld said.

"I know she's still there, I know it," he continued. "Keep fighting, baby girl, keep fighting. We are waiting for you."

Lagesfeld echoes the sentiment of first responders working tirelessly to retrieve anyone buried under the wreckage.

"The chances of us finding someone alive is diminishing with every hour that passes," said Maggie Castro with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue. "But we're always going to remain hopeful, and we are still in a rescue mission."

While that rescue mission causes frantic cries and unhinged fear to set in, one little girl at a family reunification

center quietly waited for her parent to be returned to her.

Miami Mayor Charles Burkett was making his rounds Monday, offering aid in any way he could, when he noticed the child, estimated to be 11 to 12 year old. He said she was sitting off to the side, looking at her phone.

"And I knelt down and I asked her, 'So what are you doing? You OK?'"

The girl told him she was praying.

"It was a Jewish prayer. But she was reading it to herself sitting at the site by where one of her parents presumably is. And that really brought it home to me," Burkett said. "And she was just, she wasn't crying. She was just lost. She didn't know what to do. What to say. Who to talk to."

For others who are unsure what to do or what to say, news outlets are releasing updates on the relief drives local businesses and churches have started to support the community.

Vous Church started a drive collecting everyday supplies, promising to update as more opportunities to serve become available.

Additionally BRAVE Church "opened a giving fund for the long term survivors of the Surfside building collapse," according to its Facebook announcement. They prompted those who wished to give to also cover the situation in prayer.

"Continue to pray for the first responders, displaced families, as well as those who have lost everything," the post read.

Authorities now say monetary donations are the most appreciated, as the influx of goods donated immediately following the collapse have overwhelmed storage centers, according to multiple news reports.

The Miami Heat and several local organizations have launched a hardship fund for the victims at , which has raised over \$350,000 so far.

More resources and places to donate can be found here.

While the ultimate cause of the sudden collapse of a third of the building is still unknown, reports are circulating of assessments for repairs underway prior to the collapse. Under the county's 40-year recertification process, Champlain Towers was set to start payments on the repairs July 1.

Investigation into structural damage and environment factors continues as the community rallies around those affected most by the tragedy.

Please join the Charisma News staff in praying and supporting these efforts as the Lord leads you. {eoa}

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