

Miami Churches, Pastors Respond in Hope to Tragic Condo Collapse

Pastors and churches around the country, especially in Miami, are offering words of hope and prayers along with assistance as news regarding the horrific condominium collapse spreads.

The heartbreaking task of uncovering bodies is underway at the site of a Surfside, Florida, condo after an entire side of the building collapsed in the early morning hours of Thursday. The crash of the 12-story Champlain Towers South building just blocks from the beach has left 159 people unaccounted for and four killed.

Nearly 120 residents have been recovered, according to multiple news reports. Officials do not have a set number of residents who were in the building at the time of collapse. The small beach town has become “eerily quiet” as first responders have worked tirelessly to rescue the victims.

Area getting thick with smoke or debris dust again. Very hot and humid. First Responders and media everywhere. Otherwise eerily quiet. @pbpost #miamibuildingcollapse #Surfsidecollapse #MiamiBeach @USATODAY

– Wendy Rhodes (@WendyRhodesFl) June 25, 2021

As the community suffers in a state of unknown, praying for lost loved ones to be found safe, faith leaders are taking to social media to comfort them.

Vous Church, a charismatic congregation pastored by Rich and DawnChere Wilkerson, offered not only words of comfort but shared how a team is “on the ground” to assist in “any way needed.”

Prior to his visit, of which he said television coverage could not do justice to portray the horrific reality, Gov. Ron DeSantis thanked the first responders for their immediate action. He also pointed Miami residents to a hotline to report missing persons.

A family reunification center is set up at 9301 Collins Avenue. If you have loved ones who are unaccounted for or are safe, please call 305-614-1819 to account for them.

– Ron DeSantis (@GovRonDeSantis) June 24, 2021

DeSantis echoes the words of cartoonist Randy Bish, who used his talents to also thank first responders.

My latest cartoon. #miamicollapse #miami #floridabuildingcollapse

– Randy Bish (@Bishtoons) June 25, 2021

Many churches are sharing hope-filled Scripture as their prayers ring out for all affected by this tragedy.

BRAVE church in Miami referenced Isaiah 41:10 in its Facebook post, which speaks of the closeness of Jesus in times like this.

Psalm 34:18 is the message from Love+Unltd Church.

Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse, urged believers to pray for those trapped in the rubble and their families awaiting their safe rescue, pointing to Psalm 46:1 for encouragement.

Pray for the family members of those who lived in the building waiting to hear if their loved ones are safe or not. The Bible tells us, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

– Franklin Graham (@Franklin_Graham) June 24, 2021

The community is home to a large Jewish population, many news sites have discovered. It's estimated that 20 Jews were among those missing after the collapse.

Michael Dickson, the executive director of Stand With Us Israel tweeted his support for his Jewish brothers and sisters from Israel.

Likewise, the Greater Miami Jewish Federation launched a campaign to raise funds for immediate and long-term relief for the community.

"Be part of the Jewish community's response," the federation said in a mass email. "Help those affected by the collapse of the Champlain Towers South in Surfside, FL."

The cause of the building's collapse is under investigation, but Surfside Town Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer said it was not due to natural causes nor wrath from above.

"This was not an act of God," Salzhauer told *USA Today*. "This was not a natural disaster. Buildings don't just fall." {eoa}

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