

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
149 Main Street
Madison Heights, VA 24572



MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

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Pam Hubbard
Music Director

George B. Harris, Minister
Email: bernerdharris@yahoo.com
MHCC16@yahoo.com
Church Phone: 845-3855
Open doors-----Open hearts

Brenda Harris
Secretary

Disaster Preparedness

Are you ready to spend a few days without electricity? Since it looks like Hurricane Florence may come this way it is necessary to be prepared. You do not have time to prepare when it strikes, you have to be prepared beforehand. For example, I had a generator several years ago but had difficulty starting it and it had a gas leak so I threw it away. I would have given it away but I did not want someone getting hurt due to the gas leak. So, on Tuesday I decided to go ahead and buy a generator just in case it would be needed. Well, the community has sold out of generators. The storm is three days away and they have already sold out of generators. I thought I was getting ahead of the game but ended up behind the crowd. So, I ended up ordering a dual fuel generator that will probably arrive after electricity is restored.

When I went to the grocery store I was amazed at the rush. People were buying a lot of food especially milk, bread, and water. I saw some people buying perishable food and began to wonder why people would buy perishable food when there is the threat of losing electricity. Most people do not have the survival training that many of us veterans have. While I am not an expert I do have some knowledge and experience. So, I thought I would share a few ideas.

People instinctively stock up on water. I personally do not stock up on water due to shelf life but I did buy some this time to put in the freezer to help the contents of the freezer to stay cool and to have a little water just in case. As a side note I have the ability to filter water if needed and do expect to have plenty of rain water to filter. I recommend people stock up on anything that is non-perishable. Having a surplus of paper plates, plastic ware, sanitizing wipes and flushable wipes always comes in handy. I especially recommend stocking up on shelf stable food. Freeze dried food has a shelf life of over 25 years. I recommend that people stock up on as much of that as you have room for. The Dollar Tree stores have freeze dried fruit that make wonderful snacks and shelf stable milk that has a 6 month shelf life. Bread can be toasted to extend its shelf life if need be. It is a good idea to stock up on crackers as a bread alternative. I find meal bars and peanut butter to be a good for snacks and they have a good shelf life. I also prefer to stock up on chicken salad snacks and Slim Jims.

When electricity goes out I try to keep the doors shut to the refrigerator and freezer as long as possible. If I have to open the door for anything I get the things I use the most often out and put them in a cooler with ice. This prevents opening the refrigerator unnecessarily and letting precious cool air escape. Kroger has dry ice that will extend your ability to keep food frozen but it is expensive and it will sell out very fast. It is really nice to be able to open the freezer after three days of no electricity and still have frozen food. When your frozen food does thaw out, you can cook it if you have a means and that will increase the shelf life. I have a propane grill if you need to do some cooking and I am sure you have a friend or two that will do the same. Make sure you have way more batteries and candles than you think you will ever need. When it comes to candles I recommend stocking up on lots of tea candles. They are perfect for when electricity goes out; you can buy several in a pack, they are inexpensive, put out good light, and there is no worry of them falling over.

Of course it is a good idea to have extra gasoline and medicine on hand if you can. I order my medicine every 28 days so that I end up being able to stock up a little bit each month. While there are many more ideas that could be covered these are just a few off of the top of my head. Oh, by the way, speaking of preparedness, by all means, put the Lord first, give thanks to the Lord, spend time in prayer, and read the Bible.

George