

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
July 7, 2021

“RANDOM MUSINGS FROM A TROPICAL STORM/HURRICANE”

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. (Mark 6:39)

Yesterday and last night, it was a very interesting and sometimes frustrating experience for me. The frustration part comes from my struggle with patience (do you ever struggle with patience?) as I waited all day long for something meteorologically amazing to happen. The rain finally arrived about 11:00am, and we were treated to what was a constant dribble through the afternoon. By 5:00pm I had measured all of a quarter of an inch of rain and a peak wind gust of 27mph. Things picked up a bit in the evening, by 10:00pm we were up to an inch and a half of rain and a gust of 39mph. 10:00pm? That's past our bedtime here in Gulf Cove, FL, so it was time to turn in...just as the real fun was beginning. It figures that the best part of the storm would pass while it's too dark to enjoy it thoroughly. For about 5 hours the rain blew sideways and washed all our 4th of July fireworks debris from the driveway and street out front of us. The lightning flashed and the thunder boomed. Not a whole lot of sleep was to be had, but I really have no problem with that, at least not yet. Nap time will likely arrive by midafternoon. As far as I can tell the storm surge never got anywhere near the top of our seawall (it did last year with Hurricane Eta) and there was at least a brief wash over of the street out front of us due to the heavy rain. With the break of day came the opportunity to go out and assess the damage. The rain had stopped, and the winds had calmed greatly. I pictured Jesus in the boat late last night out in our canal giving the weather his command as in the verse above from Mark chapter 4. *“Peace! Be still!”* A quick inspection of my surroundings revealed that our yard waste bin had been blown over and a few clippings of palm fronds had spilled out into the side yard. Overnight our top windspeed was 46mph. All of the blooms had been blown off of the hibiscus bush behind the house, and about a half a foot of water needed to be drained off the pool. The next stop was the rain gauge. A storm total of 8.45 inches was collected. That's pretty impressive! I just wish that I could have witnessed the deluge in daylight. As I looked at the network of National Weather Service precipitation observers this morning it was clear that the swath of the heaviest rainfall extended from Gulf Cove and El Jobean up through Northwest Port Charlotte and North Port. All of the observers (7 of us) reported 8 to almost 11 inches. Amounts were much less (2-4 inches) to the west in Englewood and Venice, as well as to the east Beyond US 41 in Port Charlotte into Punta Gorda. I can only assume that the heavier rain band extended across South Gulf Cove and southwestward into Rotonda and Placida, but we don't have any cooperative observers there to record and report the data. Any volunteers? Driving to the church this morning I took a more circuitous route than normal, looking for flooded roadways. I didn't find any. I believe the fact that many of our retention ponds were still very low from an extremely dry winter and spring can be credited with that. I did see a tree that had been blown onto a rooftop in The Gardens of Gulf Cove neighborhood, on Coliseum just up from Mickey D's. Slowing down for a good look indicated that if the tree wasn't already dead, hospice would most certainly be involved. The wood of that tree trunk looked as rotten as a 10-year-old apple. Here at the church there's water in the swales, there's a few small branches littering the sidewalks, and there's a whole lot of contented treefrogs happily croaking away in the moistness. The storm, at least for us, is now a part of our history, so I guess we'll start scanning the horizon for the next one. Through it all, and with everything else in our lives, we need to remember that Jesus is always in the boat with us. In the middle of whatever storm that comes, be it physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual, we find an unstirred and unafraid Savior who we can “wake up” (I don't mean that literally) and then watch what amazing things that He does for us.