

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Final Praise & Thanksgiving Event In Remembrance Of Hurricanes Irma And Maria Held On St. John

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ST. JOHN -- St. Johnians joined members of the Mapp administration in Cruz Bay on Sunday for the last of three praise and thanksgiving events held territory-wide to remember the 2017 storms that forever altered the lives of Virgin Islanders, and to give thanks for the progress made in their wake so far.

A number of church ministries and their praise teams spoke and sang of God's goodness and mercies; there was a mime performance of [You Raise Me Up](#), and Governor Kenneth Mapp delivered closing remarks.

"We have these services because we are a people of faith in the Virgin Islands, and we know that we are experienced hurricane folks," Governor Kenneth Mapp said. The governor spoke of storms that affected the territory before Irma and Maria, and said while Virgin Islanders are no strangers to storms, "they remain very destructive and very painful."

Even so, the USVI is becoming better at understanding and responding to these weather systems, the governor said, to the point where Congress has taken some of the ideas set forth by the territory and has implemented them into the Stafford Act to help communities recover more robustly, the governor added.

"But it doesn't make the job any easier," Mr. Mapp said. "When we say we celebrate and give praise and thanks one year following the disasters, we know three to four months following the storms we spent time cleaning up, making our roads passable, rebuilding our power systems, tending to our healthcare facilities, and really just trying to get some modicum of safety, security and medical response for our community."

Mr. Mapp reiterated that the territory's recovery will be a long process of five to nine years. "This territory will find itself not only rebuilding homes and putting roofs on houses, but it will be rebuilding roads, it will be rebuilding from the ground up hospital and medical facilities, schools, government buildings, first responder locations like fire stations and police stations across all three islands. And this is not going to happen in one, two, or even three years.

"And so we ask all good people of faith to continue to pray for our territory, and to continue to pray for the hardworking people across the Virgin Islands in the nonprofit community, in the private sector and the public sector, as we all came together to develop a strategy for our recovery," the governor said.

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