

Assalam Alekum

Masjid Al-Tawheed

<http://southernoregonmosque.org>

Contact: 541-678-7411

Tuesday, September 8th 2020, our community in Talent and Phoenix, Oregon woke up to a smoky 100° day with winds gusting to 35 mph. With Covid-19 restrictions, our masjid, Masjid Al Tawheed, is closed, but safe we felt, protected by fencing, cameras and most importantly, by watchful, supportive neighbors. Insha Allah, it would be a day to appreciate our lives and our families, and to stay indoors and relax.

At 11 AM, low flying helicopters broke the calm. Dense black smoke was suddenly visible and sirens wailed. Minutes later, cell phones lit up with alerts, and loudspeakers from police shouted out: "Evacuate now!" The wind fanned flames quickly spread across fields, and engulfed homes and other structures. It soon crossed and closed down Interstate 5. A farmer was shown on the news in his tractor valiantly trying to protect property and crops. But it was futile. Anxious and fearful, people left with little more than the clothes on their backs. To where? Suddenly their lives were turned upside down. Some were admitted to hastily arranged shelters. Some fortunate ones got a hotel room. Many have only their cars. Hours later it was revealed that more than 600 families in the cities of Talent and Phoenix, Oregon, were instantly homeless. Families.

In the middle of the fire zone is Masjid Al Tawheed. Did it survive, Insha Allah? Police closed the towns while fires flared from gas lines, water from broken water lines and with power lines down throughout the area. Nonetheless, a local resident surreptitiously drove through and posted a YouTube video. At minute 39 he passed the neighborhood of the masjid... total devastation, but a quick glimpse showed it appeared to still be standing! A few of our intrepid members found a way around road blocks to investigate. Winding past a burned out trailer park and apartment buildings, then through our neighbors' completely devastated subdivision, they reached Masjid Al Tawheed. They found all its trees, shrubbery and fence burned. A plastic shed for tools next to a masjid window burned leaving nary a trace, but died with heat so intense it blew out the window. Fire had come right to its doorstep—but it survived, Alhamdulillah! The little masjid, lovingly crafted by its members, with its stucco walls and tin roof, had survived! But the view is now awful. In every direction our neighbors' homes have been destroyed. This was our community, it had been a vibrant community of young families, friendly to us. Now they are all homeless. Mashallah, we can rejoice that our masjid and our members have survived relatively unscathed, but the community we live and thrive in, has not. Our neighbors' losses are heartbreaking to us.

Our neighbors, our community, though non-Muslims, have been our friends, even defenders of our faith. Really, you may ask? Really, we say.

When planning for our Masjid, the city government was helpful to our creating a successful plan, despite difficulties when our contractor had to abandon the project. Upon completion and opening our Masjid for services, we were officially and openly welcomed by the City of Talent which developed and voted to approve a City Resolution, noting with pride their openness to diversity. When violence against Muslims and Masjids surged across the country, a nonprofit called the Rogue Action Committee, sent volunteers to stand watch outside our Masjid while we prayed Jum'ah. Initially, we advised them it wasn't necessary, but they persisted and continue to this day, following us to stand watch now as we conduct prayers in the park.

Alhamdulillah, we are not victims here; we are survivors. As survivors in this now devastated community, and as sincere Muslims, we feel obliged to help our neighbors, but because we are so few in number, and with very limited resources, we invite you to help. These are words resonating within us:

"One who spends the night with a full stomach while his neighbor is hungry, has not believed in me. One who spends the night clothed, while his neighbor has no clothes, has not believed in me."

[Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, v.2, pp.78-79]

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We know that many have insurance to provide support and assistance, and some can get government assistance, but the most vulnerable among us--and hundreds in our neighborhood--can rely on no such support. And all need immediate support. They have lost their homes, possessions and many even their jobs. Here's how you can help us to assist our neighbors:

We have dedicated our savings account at Rogue Credit Union for a fundraiser for neighbors.

You can access this account in several ways:

1. Call Rogue Credit (800-856-7328) and tell them you want to donate to Masjid Al Tawheed's Business savings account. The account number is 1581650-00
2. Mail a check made out to Masjid Al Tawheed to: Mary Foster 2911 East Main St. Ashland 97520
3. Open the masjid's website (SouthernOregonMosque.org) and click the donate button. Use Paypal to donate.