

# Lamplight

A Newsletter of the US Disaster Program



*"Be dressed, ready for service and keep your lamps burning." — LUKE 12:35*

Issue #15 | January 2013

## A Note from Katie

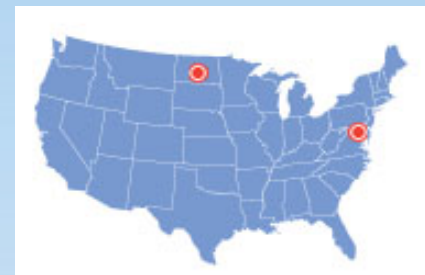
*In the wake of Sandy and the other disasters of the past few months, we've once again seen the Church's capacity to support its neighbors in challenging times. Congregations opened their doors to provide power, heat, shelter, food, a listening ear to those who could come to them, and have stepped outside their doors, bringing what resources they have out into their neighborhoods. Below you'll find powerful stories of transformation, both in the first few months following a disaster, in Keansburg, NJ following Sandy, and in the long-term recovery process in Minot, ND. Please continue to lift up these leaders and all those working towards recovery in your prayers.*

*Peace,  
Katie*

## Creating Community Renewal After Hurricane Sandy

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, parish-based food programs saw an increased need in the dioceses of Newark, New York, Long Island and New Jersey.

In Keansburg, New Jersey, St. Mark's saw its daily soup kitchen attendance double. Before Hurricane Sandy, St. Mark's provided a simple daily lunch for approximately 45 people struggling with mental illness and addiction. After the hurricane, the program grew in numbers and diversity to an average of 85 people, including impacted families, women, children, the elderly, as well as their usual guests. Unlike the image of a beach community, Keansburg residents are predominately working poor folks, people with addiction issues and renters. As a town already down on its luck, Keansburg was especially



### In this Issue:

Keansburg, NJ  
Creating Community Renewal  
After Hurricane Sandy

Minot, ND  
Finding a Niche in the  
Ecumenical Rebuild

### News:

#### Flood Relief in Long Island, Newark, New Jersey, and New York

Episcopal Relief & Development is working alongside these diocese to meet the needs of their communities in the aftermath of hurricane Sandy. Help by giving to the Sandy relief fund [here!](#)

#### Join "Ready to Serve"

Offer your services to your vulnerable neighbors after a disaster. [Sign up here](#) to be called upon to volunteer.

### Current Emergency Response Projects:

#### Hurricane Sandy Response

Diocese of New York  
Diocese of New Jersey  
Diocese of Long Island  
Diocese of Newark

#### Hurricane Isaac Response

Diocese of Louisiana

vulnerable to the storm's devastation.

People displaced from their homes began to come to the daily meal, not only from Keansburg, but from the neighboring towns. Keansburg belongs to a series of closely situated small towns including Union Beach where many people's homes were destroyed. As more people came to the soup kitchen, St. Mark's expanded the one-hour serving time to three hours and increased the amount of food served.

St. Mark's found their community's needs were much greater than that of a daily lunch, and hired two social workers to help guests negotiate the process of securing housing, handle emotional and psychological trauma, and apply for entitlement programs.

Since the hurricane, the soup kitchen has transformed into a ministry with an expanded mission: addressing guests' diverse material and emotional needs. The new mission is described by its new name, The Center for Community Renewal, and seeks to prioritize relationships and human dignity. Instead of calling people "clients", the center is inviting recipient to be their "guests." Having an expanded lunch time of three hours allows time for building community between guests, volunteers, and social workers. Guests have begun to volunteer with setting up and sweeping, too.

"We're forming new relationships everyday," says St. Mark's Senior Warden and the Center's executive director, Harvey Cotterell. Many of the volunteers have also been impacted by the storm. One lost everything in a neighboring town and now volunteers every day.

At the same time St. Mark's was undergoing a transition of another sort, as it was in the process of merging with Saint Clements Episcopal Church in Belford. Though church mergers are often hard on parishes trying to build one community out of two, members from both congregations jumped into volunteering together at the center. A shared vision to serve and heal the damage done by Hurricane Sandy helped to quicken members' investment in each other's lives.

Mr. Cottrell prioritizes "creating a place of safety and welcome" as the framework for disaster relief. Early on in the relief process many lunch guests just needed some human connection and a listening ear; people needed to talk about their experience of the storm and the hardship they have had to endure. During one lunch Mr. Cottrell sat with a guest who shared with him her struggle with severe depression. Exacerbated by the storm, the woman's mental state was leading her into suicidal thoughts. Mr. Cottrell

## Volunteer Opportunity:

### Diocese of [Louisiana](#)

Home rebuild program

### Diocese of [North Dakota](#)

All Saints Episcopal Church in Minot, South Dakota, is looking for volunteer groups to rebuild homes. Contact The Rev. Mary Johnson to volunteer coordinator to schedule your trip [now!](#)

### Diocese of [Texas](#)

Home rebuild program in Bastrop

## Current Disaster Recovery Projects:

### [HELP NOW!](#)

#### **The Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts**

St. John's Episcopal Church in Williamstown is working with ecumenical partners to respond to Irene-related flooding.

#### **The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota**

All Saints Episcopal Church in Minot is coordinating with volunteers to rebuild flooded homes.

#### **The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota**

Working with the Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, a case manager is connecting residents impacted by gradually rising flood waters to Church, non-profit and government services.

#### **The Episcopal Community Services of Louisiana (ECSLA)**

Case managers are supporting affected communities as they adapt to the financial, emotional and social changes caused by the oil spill.

#### **Jericho Road**

A neighborhood-based home-building organization is working to revitalize Central City, a New Orleans neighborhood recovering from Hurricane Katrina and decades of disinvestment.

#### **Episcopal Diocese of Vermont**

The Episcopal Diocese of

invited her to share her story with the onsite social worker who was able to get her the medical attention she needed.

While the goal of the daily meal is to provide for the guest's needs and not to proselytize, 10 to 12 guests have recently begun attending the church. Mr. Cottrell credits this to a shift towards relational ministry. A community of recovery is being born between volunteers, guests, and the resident social workers who share daily life together. New people are still finding their way to St. Mark's and its resources, especially as some short-term recovery organizations pack up to go. Mr. Cottrell says, "The church is staying for the long haul."

[Click here to follow St. Mark's and The Center for Community Renewal on facebook.](#)

## Finding a Niche in the Ecumenical Rebuild Community

*by The Rev. Mary Johnson, Missioner and Coordinator of Volunteers at All Saint's Church, Minot, ND*

In June 2011 Minot, North Dakota flooded, leaving many people without housing. Even before the flooding there was an extreme housing shortage. Now water sat in homes up to the eaves, water filled with debris, silt, sewage, and industrial and agricultural chemicals that would take weeks to drain away. About a quarter of the city's residents lost their homes.

As the recovery process entered its long term phase it was easy to feel lost. I sat on the Unmet Needs Committee of our local Long Term Recovery organization asking myself: what was the best way for our congregation to help?

When Katie Mears, from Episcopal Relief & Development, visited our church she emphasized that the grant they were providing could best be used to help folks that "fell through the cracks" of the larger relief organizations. The Mennonites, HOPE Village, and Lutheran Disaster Response had all chosen to



Volunteer Christopher Eil with Construction Coordinator Paul Zaharia

Vermont is working through a network of churches to support families affected by the floods resulting from Tropical Storm Irene.

### Episcopal Diocese of Texas

Calvary Episcopal Church is working with its ecumenical partners in Bastrop to rebuild homes destroyed by the fires in the fall of 2011.

### Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem

Trinity Episcopal Church in West Pittston is working with ecumenical partners in Northeast Pennsylvania to support neighbors affected by flooding as a result of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in September 2011.

### New Resources for Disaster Relief:

[The Sunday After a Disaster](#)

[Ministering to Children After a Disaster](#)

[Tips for Parents in Helping Children and Youth Cope](#)



U.S. Disaster Program

### Contact Us:

Add your name to the "Ready to Serve" volunteer and skills roster at [volunteer@er-d.org](mailto:volunteer@er-d.org)

Katie Mears, Program Manager  
[kmears@er-d.org](mailto:kmears@er-d.org)



focus on conventional-built homes. God knows there are plenty of houses to keep them busy! Their experienced workers don't like the flimsy construction of many of the older trailers, with their pressed-wood siding, their small door and window openings, thin particle board subflooring, tiny plumbing fixtures, and poor insulation. These materials often soak up water and lose their structural integrity. Generally some people think rehabbing a trailer is bad stewardship.

On the Unmet Needs Committee I heard so many people's stories. I learned that there were fewer resources available to help people who had lost their mobile homes. Some of the city's largest mobile home parks were in a valley, and virtually all the mobile homes that couldn't be hauled away by the time of the mandatory evacuations were damaged so badly that they had to be demolished. I kept hearing the stories of flood victims whose mobile homes had been bulldozed. They were now living in FEMA's Temporary Housing Units. Many people had no idea how they would ever afford to buy another trailer, and high rents made apartments out of the question.

I heard about a woman in her 70s who, in a panic after her flooded mobile home was bulldozed, purchased a 40-year-old mobile home in a park up on the hill. It was in her price range, but it needed a great deal of work to be safe and functional.

I heard about a senior citizen who was able to get her mobile home moved out before the evacuation last summer, but the costs of moving it back totally depleted her savings. She hoped for some assistance in getting skirting, plumbing and electrical hookups, and a deck and stairs to access her home. But since she saved her home from the flood she was not eligible for assistance from other organizations.

We were able to identify people with trailers as folks that "fell through the cracks." Our congregation could use our funds to impact people made truly vulnerable by the storm and ensure they were not overlooked. This is what our role as Episcopalians could be.

It has been a wonderful to be able to respond to the community's stories by saying "we will do what we can to help." Paul Zaharia, our construction coordinator, has lived in mobile homes. His mother and sister each lost a mobile home in the 2011 flood. Paul understands, and he has experience working on this type of housing. Volunteer teams have come to All Saints' from Colorado, Montana, and Wisconsin; and volunteers from Minot have put in almost as many hours helping people with their mobile homes.

We seem to have found our niche. We're getting a reputation. Whether you call them manufactured

homes, mobile homes or trailers, we're the ones that will work with them. We have contributed electrical work, insulated, hung sheet rock, installed doors and cabinets and flooring, and even helped move items back from storage and done some weed-eating. Case workers and even folks from HOPE Village are contacting us with referrals. We still work on "stick-built" homes, and we still schedule our volunteers to work on HOPE Village projects. But we keep a special place in our hearts, our budget, and our schedules for folks with trailers.

[Click here to read the full article about how All Saint's worked to serve an unmet need of a vulnerable population.](#)

