

## Stretching Their Faith through Service

Sixteen members of Trinity's short-term mission team represented Jesus by doing hurricane relief work on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi January 6-14, 2006. Joining 275 other volunteers based at Christus Victor church in Ocean Springs, God's Spirit sent this team on a path of stretching their faith through service.

By the Spirit's power, sometimes orderly and sometimes overwhelming, the mission team soon learned that the Gulf residents dealt with the meaning of Katrina in their own terms. Conversations revealed a mixture of personal assurance of God's sovereignty and love, as well as political and economic concerns.

Each day team members met challenges that stretched their faith; whether it was serving breakfast in the church mess hall, sorting food and clothing at the distribution center, running errands for the kitchen staff, or sharing a hug, a smile, or a bit of humor.

The team's confidence grew as they witnessed the ways God used them and their abilities; removing piles of debris from Troy and Carolyn's yard, moving furniture for Linda, searching for memories with Pat and Ion as the team removed damaged belongings from their home, listening to four year Alexander share the story of his "broken house," assisting physicians and patient's at free medical clinics, or listening to stories with compassion and understanding.

The team was encouraged by seeing the Holy Spirit work in a visible and miraculous way when they met and visited with a World War II veteran, Mr. Gautier, a survivor not only of Katrina, but also of the Bataan Death March.

The team experienced the confidence of what the body of Christ can do when believers cooperate in a big task as they spent three days cleaning Pat's yard and gutting her house; tearing out drywall and insulation, removing appliances and fixtures, and spraying the remaining wall studs with Clorox.

As team members tried to find perspective in the destruction, devastation, and loss along the Gulf Coast, it was the transforming power of God's grace that stretched their faith and led them on a path of joy in serving others.

"God may not always give us answers, but He always gives us grace."

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.  
Hebrew 11:1*

