

# Hurricane Isabel - Mission Work Team Report

## Engelhard, North Carolina

### November 3-8, 2003

**"And it happened again....and again....and again."  
God had prepared the way - was there working and ready for us.**

As we have come to understand, sometimes the "unknown" of a mission trip can lead to really seeing God at work. This trip was no exception. Anticipating hard tree work using chainsaws, it was no surprise as one of our hosts, Richard Stewart, directed us to the cemetery at Amity United Methodist Church on our first morning. Looking over the downed trees laying across headstones, Richard said it would be okay if it took us all week to clear them out. After Richard headed off, team member Floyd Hamrick said, "We need a tractor." At that very instance we



looked up to see a man driving down his driveway about 300 yards away on a farm tractor. The rest of us told Floyd "there goes a tractor, go get it." And it happened again, a few minutes later Floyd came driving up on that tractor and brought with him Dave Murray. The tractor belonged to TJ Mann. TJ told Floyd that after the hurricane, a mission team from Missouri came to his house with a Bobcat and removed two large trees from his yard. He felt it was his turn to help others out by the use of his tractor. Dave, who was suppose to be working for TJ all day, decided to come help us all day.

Then it happened again. Dr. Rev. Bill Neely and Malcolm McCloud surprised us by traveling from First Presbyterian in Greenville to help us. Malcolm brought a much-needed pitchfork and rake. Then it happened again. TJ and Dave told Floyd that all volunteers were invited to Swan Quarter for a special lunch. So, about 11:00 a.m. we all loaded up, taking Dave with us to enjoy a wonderful lunch catered by Kelly's Restaurant.

Arriving back at the church, everyone worked hard and we ended up finishing a "weeks worth" of tree clearing in one day. Then our team went with Dave and helped him complete the job he was scheduled to do that day. Dave is 68 years old and sat and watched the hurricane come to his house and wondered if he should have stayed. The work day was ended sitting on the front porch at TJ's house and watching

him point out across the fields to where his father was born, where he was born, and where he would be buried in the Amity church cemetery.

Day two was again tree work. Arriving at our largest job site for the day, we needed a tractor. And it happened again. We looked in the neighbor's back yard to see a small tractor with a front-end loader, just what we needed. Yes, Floyd got it for the day. It belonged to a retired Baptist minister, John Richardson, who once was the pastor at Ridge Baptist Church in Gastonia. And it happened again. Jimmy Hite, of First Presbyterian Greenville arrived to help. Again the job was completed by the end of the day.

The next two workdays were hard work involving tearing out floors. And it happened again. On our way to the first house, we got to see and photograph a brilliant double rainbow. The house was about ½ mile from where the state road maintenance ended. Only one car drove by all day. It allowed us time to be together as team and enjoy each other's company. And it happened again. The last house provided us with a backyard right on a canal where Floyd and Jim ended up catching 9 fish. Naomi Cox had lived in the house 68 years and through many hurricanes and she said this was the first time the water had ever reached her floor. Mrs. Cox was living in a camper until her house is repaired. She was such a sweet lady and invited us to come back and visit.

Dave saw us packing our trailer on Friday to leave and stopped to say goodbye. It looked like we could see a tear in his eyes as we shook hands and got ready to leave. We had to drive into town before heading down highway 264 and home. About an hour later as we passed Dave's house, he was standing on his front steps waving to us and we waved back, knowing it happened again. Lives have been touched and new friends have been made for life.

As we have come to understand, God is already out there working. We just try to keep up. Where we stayed, three Bible verses are painted on the walls. Our team leaves you with them.

"O God, we meditate on your unfailing love as we worship in the temple." Ps 48:9  
"The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love." Ps 145:8  
"Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom." II Cor 3:27

**BY - UNION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**TEAM MEMBERS:** Lewis Brooks, Floyd Hamrick, Billy Wilson, Jim Deaton

The Presbytery and individual churches will be sending teams to help in rehabilitation in Eastern North Carolina over the next year. Please let Ginnie Stevens know when your church is sending a group and if you are willing to include individuals from other congregations. Also, please complete a Post\_Mission Trip survey so other churches that are looking for a place to go will have an evaluation of the site you worked. Forms are available at the Presbytery office, contact Ginnie Stevens at [vestevens@aol.com](mailto:vestevens@aol.com) or 828/438-4217.