

## MISSION TEAMS BRING RELIEF TO 'IRENE' VICTIMS

By Fred DeWitt, 24 March 2012

Last summer, Pamlico County, North Carolina, was under water; as much as six feet of brackish water. Hurricane Irene had come and gone. When the water receded, the clean-up began. FEMA declared the damage to North Carolina as 'minor'. So, too, was the federal assistance.

The family in one home damaged by the water, native Lumpee Indians, had moved to the small community of Florence ten years ago to make a new beginning in the crab and shrimp industry. But the markets had not been kind to them. As an unemployed truck driver, and with their savings depleted, the couple is currently living off \$ 632 a month in disability benefits and seasonal employment when he can find it. They are members of a Free Will Baptist Church in the nearby town of Oriental.

The family had lived through two previous floods. But this time, the water rose to four feet above the ground, and twelve inches above the floor of their home. They are one of 357 families that met the criteria for UMCOR assistance in making repairs. So they vacated their home, and the UMVIM volunteers began their work. The Area Construction Coordinator, Tom Gates, estimates that the repairs will be completed, and the family will be able to move back into their home, sometime late this summer.

Last week, to help UMVIM in their mission, **St. Paul UMC's** Long-Term Recovery (LTR) Team, of ten volunteers, traveled to Pamlico County and was joined by an LTR Team, of six volunteers, from Charlotte, North Carolina. The work performed on the family's home included replacing and reframing off-grade floor joists, installing new floor underlayment, dismantling and reassembling the bathroom fixtures, electrical repairs, replacing the back porch decking, replacing the exterior siding at the rear of the house, installing new batt insulation under the floor, and clean-up.

Fred Culvyhouse, the Team Leader, shared his thoughts about the team: "The volunteers were cooperative and enjoyed themselves. They learned new skills. The work was performed quickly and was of high quality. The owners were happy to see us, and expressed a sincere appreciation of the work performed. They even prepared a delicious lunch for the volunteers."

Recovery involves both 'the material' and 'the emotional'. Next week, a new group of volunteers will arrive to continue the work. For more information about the UMVIM mission, ask a volunteer about their experience.

( 397 words )