

Update – March 6, 2008

August 19-20, 2007, the rains came to southeastern Minnesota. Some towns, like Rushford, Stockton, and Minnesota City, were especially hard hit. While we haven't heard much about ongoing need—**the work is not nearly done**, and many people remain disheartened along with being financially and emotionally stretched.

There is some good news. Rushford has had the most continuous help, much of it due to St. Mark's Lutheran church and Pastor Merlin Stephan. They were generous to offer their church basement and parsonage basement (both damaged in the flood) to house volunteers. Lutheran Disaster Relief came and helped build the dormitories, and have been coordinating the work of volunteers who come to help. Nearly 400 homes have been mudded, cleaned, and rebuilt. Work is continuing at a pretty steady pace, thanks to church volunteers, people of God from as far away as Georgia, Florida, and Indiana.

A **“Work Week”** has been set aside specifically for volunteers from the LCMS and their friends **April 15 to 20, (Tuesday-Saturday) 2008**. Housing in local churches will be made available for those who want to serve several days or you can also serve just one day (it is about 2 1/4 hours from the Twin Cities). We will be partnering with Grace Lutheran in Stockton and with Lutheran Disaster Relief projects. Outdoor work will be available for youth groups (weather dependent). We are also welcome to stay and worship on Sunday in Stockton or Rushford, showing our support for the congregations of these small communities. Join us to rebuild homes and lives, and to reflect Christ's love and mercy for those who are still in great need of encouragement.

Please keep in mind, our call is not simply to restore belongings and repair houses—it is to share the love of God through His Son Jesus the Savior. We also want to connect the people with the local congregation, so they know they have a place to go for encouragement and prayer and relationships with others who care.

What skills are needed during the **Work Week April 15-20**? There is a need for both skilled and unskilled workers. There will be rebuilding and if the weather permits, there will be outdoor clean-up. Volunteers are needed to talk with and encourage the residents and to help prepare meals for volunteers. Praying with and for homeowners is also very important. This has been a discouraging time for many and they can use some optimism and hope.

For more information, or to register individually or as a group, contact Vicki Strong, who is coordinating disaster relief work for LCMS Minnesota North and South Districts, strongv@woodburylutheran.org. You may also go to Woodbury Lutheran's website www.woodburylutheran.org, or call Vicki at 651.730.5049 (home) or 651.208.4353 (cell).