



S.T.O.R.M. REPORT

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Short Term Outreach, Relief & Missions

A Newsletter From the Office of the Short-Term Missions and Disaster Response Coordinator

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“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” James 1:27

Taking Short-Term Missions to Your Own Backyard



Love Boxes all packed and ready to be delivered to families in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

In the current coronavirus climate, we find ourselves living in, where gatherings are still limited, and hand sanitizer, masks, and social distancing are all strongly encouraged, many churches have had to cancel their VBS and summer camps. But not all! Some churches have been able to get creative to work around this summer’s limitations.

Theophilus OPC, in Anaheim, California recently hosted a virtual Camp Together. Pastor Peter Sim writes, “This year, our church hosted an “online VBS” called “Camp Together.” It was a three-day event that focused on teaching Hebrews 10:23-25 as our theme memory work, through the stories of Genesis 3 and Genesis 6-9. It was quite an undertaking for our church, as it was done digitally for the first time and also pretty much made from scratch (as all of our VBS’s have been) to really hone in on what we felt was a particularly important theme for our covenant youth – that we could trust in our faithful God, and that we must not neglect to meet together, but instead that we need to encourage one another and stir up one another to love and good works.

New Hope OPC, in Bridgeton, New Jersey is hosting a Virtual Art Camp this week. Camp Coordinator Tracey Taylor writes, “For several years now, New Hope has run an art camp each summer for children in our

community. To our joy, this camp has turned out to be a wonderful way to connect with new families and to address key themes of the Gospel—creation, fall, redemption and restoration—using art as a vehicle for delight, reflection, and glory to God.

Lake Sherwood OPC, in Lake Sherwood, Florida has also had to change their in-person plans to virtual plans. Hayley Avery writes, “Planning for VBS started in January of this year but, as with almost everything else, was interrupted due to the coronavirus outbreak in the US. As the church continued to try to figure out what the next steps would be it was looking fairly bleak in terms of actually getting to have a VBS this year. This was going to be the first time in a while that Lake Sherwood would host a VBS as our group of little ones was only now beginning to grow again.

Read more about these “out of the box” plans on our website: opcstm.org/2020/07/15/to-your-own-backyard/.

Archeologists of Our Own Lives

by Glenn Moots, Midland resident, homeowner, OPC member, flood victim

Our home had always been headquarters for education, vocation, fellowship, hospitality, and service. We homeschooled, established our businesses, (including e-commerce, computer repair, academic consulting, and equestrian jewelry), organized holiday service projects for elderly friends, and hosted parties for church friends and others who enjoyed the lake without having to go on vacation. Independence Day and "Welcome Summer" parties at our home became a tradition. Our lakefront home was a place of recreation, reading, writing, and praise and worship with family and friends.

All of that changed on May 19, 2020. We returned the morning after two local dams failed to discover Sanford lake fading away and the remaining water draining out. Where the lake once was, forest stumps were revealed along with debris including docks, hoists, decks, boats, golf carts, and household items. A river now ran through an eroded lake bed that hid dangerous patches of quicksand.

Six to eight feet of water in both our house and garage had destroyed almost everything. Our property was covered with mud and silt, inside and out--including the silverware drawer! Almost every bookshelf had collapsed, spilling books into the

mud. Closets were forced to empty, while appliances and furniture overturned, sometimes moved to other areas of the house. A six-foot slider was thrust into the kitchen, ushering our dining room contents (a solid oak dining room set, boxes of books, and a tool chest) into the lake, never to be found. Our piano was destroyed and put into the dumpster.

The flood obliged us to become archaeologists of our own lives, digging what we could out of the mud, drying or washing to save whatever possible. Outside the house, the deck was completely torn away. The shed was dragged toward the lake--only held back by a tree. The garage was in complete disarray and covered with mud. We called friends and began the process of mucking out and saving what we could. Photos and mementos were restored by a small team of friends offsite while onsite we scooped all of our material blessings into wheelbarrows to go to the dump. Thousands of books became bricks to be shoveled out of windows. Items had to be quickly sorted and removed so that all wet building materials could be torn out. We boarded up broken windows and doors as looting became our focus with our now vulnerable home open to even further violation. We left our home that day after an emotionally and physically exhausting race against mold and destruction, able to get

just two or three hours of sleep in a hotel.

Read the rest of Glenn's account on our website:

opcdisasterresponse.org

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THE MOOTS FAMILY IS COUNTING ON US!

THE NEEDS:

Volunteers, Pick-up Truck

Please e-mail Sam: midlandvolunteers@opc.org

To donate: give.opc.org

News From the OPC Short-Term Mission Fields

Boardwalk Chapel

They are especially looking forward to their final training week: The Boardwalk Chapel 2020 Evangelism Conference. The week is all about growing in Evangelism and is led by Dr. Krabbendam, Chris Byrd, and Rev. Al Baker! It will include "classroom" training and also a lot of opportunity to observe and/or participate in personal evangelism and street preaching with experienced evangelists and ministers. Come spend

the end of your summer with us at the Boardwalk Chapel!

Japan:

The summer trip to Japan has been cancelled. While there was hope that perhaps it could be postponed to the fall/winter, no one is convinced that Japan will be open for travel by then. The presbytery will meet again in a couple of weeks and reassess the best course of action.

Quebec:

Pastor Westerveld reports that while they had hoped to work out an online version of English for Kids this summer, due to some complicated and extenuating circumstances they are not going to be able to. While disappointed, they are hunkering down to prepare for next year.

Go to our website for more on OPC Short Term Missions: opcstm.org

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