



The Taftsville Chapel Current

God calls us as followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as a of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to our world.

Sam Carbaugh, *Editor*, Carie Good, Janet North & Virginia Schlabach, *Newsletter Staff*

September 2011



Wake of Irene

We woke up Monday morning to a perfect blue and green summer day. The sky was crisp with brilliant white puffy clouds, the air fresh and crystal clear, the song sparrow and phoebe having their usual friendly morning conversation. Our power had been out, so it was that eerie kind of quiet, and the rumble from the brook was still loud, but diminished from the night before. The night before it roared and thundered and sounded like a million freight trains as trees and boulders and debris catapulted through the swirling brown torrent, and our flooding wasn't too bad. But now, it was a beautiful morning.

Because our power was out, we made coffee with our camp stove, and then decided to drive into town to find cell coverage to make some calls. Where our brook cuts out to the main road and passes through culverts and under bridges – that was when we got our first glimpse of the destruction. The road was simply gone in some places, cars slowly making their way past on one lane. A neighbor's driveway bridge was demolished – twisted and torn with logs and uprooted trees smashed against it. Parts of the road were still awash with the brown, mucky water.

In town, the mood was somber, neighbors still in shock. Eyes were glazed, expressionless, quiet comprehension dawning about the enormity of the devastation as folks learned of friends and loved ones whose homes had washed away, businesses flooded and torn apart, beloved historic covered bridges destroyed, some communities

totally isolated from the rest of the world with all roads in or out impassable and with no phone or power. The bright, clear blue sky and fresh, fresh air seemed bizarre, like wait a minute, aren't you paying attention??!

Hurricane Irene ripped through Vermont, a state with stately green hills, pristine valleys, contented cows, and laced with charming brooks, streams and rivers, turning those bubbling brooks into weapons and wreaking violence on the landscape. Even in those communities unaffected by the storm, everyone is traumatized by the incomprehensible magnitude of the damage. It will be years, and maybe not even in our lifetime, before Vermont returns to "normal".

Vermont's Public Utilities Company knew the storm was coming, and crews from Texas, Illinois, Missouri, and Ontario had begun arriving by Saturday. Before the rains had stopped, convoys were heading out as the calls came in. Some crews were building their own roads to access power lines when town crews were busy elsewhere. Power across the state has been restored in record time, crews working around the clock. Within hours, road crews and heavy equipment volunteers were creating detours, making roads safe and passable, re-moving debris. There is a long way to go, but the willingness and determination to pitch in and get Vermont up and running again is evident in every single community.

It is uplifting to read of the many, many volunteers and small acts of kindness extended to neighbors and to strangers. Well, no one is a stranger this week. A notice is posted, and the town turns out with work boots, leather gloves and shovels to help dig each other out. A family with two middle-school boys riding in the back of their pick-up truck spends the day

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distributing water in 10-gallon plastic containers. A man from out of town shows up, and walks the street with his shovel over his shoulder, looking for someone that could use a hand. A woman on horseback volunteers to carry a bag of needed medicine across a swollen stream where the road is closed, to deliver to someone she has never met. Neighbors and strangers arrive to help a farmer milk his suffering cows by hand, for without power he cannot use his milking machine on his large herd. A man with a dirt bike offers to take a young man he doesn't know to check on his grandparents who are stranded far on the other side of a road which is no longer there, without power or phone. A mail person walks her impassable eight-mile route on foot to deliver her mail. A Pastor visits the Red Cross shelter set up in the High School gym, just to sit and listen. The stories and tears tumble out.

Vermont is a plucky state, and we will rebuild, and we will move on. Yet the trauma and tragedy and devastation all around are real and leave their mark. Vermonters celebrate their stubborn independence and gritty determination of self-sufficiency. Yet to survive this trauma requires cooperation and receiving help in the midst of vulnerability. Vermonters are strong. Yet my prayer is that out of this tragedy may come the kind of brokenness that leads to a yielded strength, the honest sort of humility that Jesus finds precious.

Following is an adaptation of something Randy wrote, as he absorbs the recent physical violence done to our beautiful towns, and considers the violence that has been done to his own soul and also perhaps to others, whether recent or long past:

Over time, many have made an on-going choice to stay in Vermont despite the normal hardships associated with long, harsh winters and short growing seasons. The difficulties are predictable and expected, and our capacity for resiliency and adaptation and creativity have been stretched and deepened in ways that softer locales would not call for. But this... This is an assault, and Vermont's simplicity and innocence have been violated. The sense of calm and rest that we may draw from so deeply each late summer has been cut off in violence. Suddenly, we are older in an unwelcome and surreal way, and our capacity to trust in old hills is shaken beyond counting. Visible sorts of daily graces, the kind derived from living in beauty, have become grotesque. It would appear that, if we are to again find rest within, that Something more solid yet than Creation must be sought and found. For many of us, the photographs and videos of the

wreckage and loss are a graphic image of damage already sustained over long years, in one way or another, in the otherwise calm water of our soul. What now is seen has been so, without exaggeration, for a lifetime. All the famous attributes of gritty determination and stoic pluck may become enemies of what is being revealed beneath and within. The old ways of negotiating our inner world, ancient road beds, are undermined; familiar ways of traveling are impassible, and a new and living way must be found – or else being an island, isolated and cut off, is a fresh and selfish choice; anger and defiance the only tenants. Lord, help us find You, the Creator, and redeemer of ALL creation.

Blessings, Carie

The only way out is through...

by: Lynda Knisley

Sunday afternoon, my drapes were closed on my view of the river. I assumed that all the "flatness" of the Quechee green and the parking lot behind Simon Pearce would be flooded, and I'd look into that after completing some work for school. It took sudden unbelievably loud alarms and blinding light signals in our building to launch me onto Main Street where my condo neighbors, good problem solvers all, shared a grim group stare! Who should we call when flood waters trigger an electrical malfunction we cannot locate ourselves? A fireman dealing with smoke from Simon Pearce clubbed our alarm system into submission, and I thought that was the end of our story. But it was then blessedly quiet enough for me to hear my nearest neighbor say "The water is two feet below my deck; I'm packing".

True enough. Flood waters had efficiently swallowed the bottom floor of our building. I opened the drapes and realized I could easily reach over my deck railing and touch the river. I've been told I was "practical" and "levelheaded" during this adventure. What is a "levelheaded" response when water may crest in my living room? Packing, with piles of curriculum papers heaved into a suit case first.

A bus idled on Main Street while local families were slowly boated to shore; Main Street had become a shore! This gave me ample time to notice the priorities already organized in my thinking. My parents often pointed to one deep drawer in their desk, and reminded us children that "if anything should ever happen to the house, grab that", meaning all sorts of legal documents and valuable documents in

one box. This worked for me Sunday as well. Practical! Other levelheaded advice came from friends at the mercy of hurricanes in Florida; store Tupperware near the floor where it can bob merrily along in unexpected water. Picture albums and art projects - UP, UP, since they do not float well at all! I had ample time to realize that losing "stuff" would be like surgery. "This will hurt. A lot. For awhile. What I call 'my life' will not move forward until I'm healed". Practically speaking, the only way out is through.

Our bus driver, Noah, dropped me off at an evacuation center where God graciously sent old friends by, curious to learn how they could help. They adopted me for Sunday night, and I picked up my car Monday morning. Again, mercifully, it perched at Bob's service Station for the weekend, while neighbor cars in Quechee became lumpy balls of muck.

We all found travel disrupted throughout Monday, so I drove to MVCS wondering if anyone in the condo had emailed a diagnosis; wondering if the second and third floors were soupy or somehow spared. "We're dry" someone reported. We're not allowed to live in our homes, but can visit them - no water, propane, or power until "whenever".

I acknowledge that many, many offers of support for my next weeks as a homeless person, have made it easier to start the school year. Perhaps the best way in is through. Perhaps the best way to peel the curtains back and experience Irene is to bow and follow. What a revelation of Divine power, both to give and to take away, as the song says. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Irene's Legacy: Ruin and Resilience

by: George Abetti

Today was a very emotional day for me absorbing more of the devastation from Irene via the newspaper and internet news....but even more so in going to some places today that brought home on a much more personal level the wide panoply of ruin and resilience within our precious little state of Vermont. I went to Bethel Mills to buy some flashing to keep one of the crews going on their current job in Waitsfield--and saw much more of the havoc wrought in their warehouse. I also saw joy in their faces at the first sale since the deluge--even though we trekked through the foot of mud in the warehouse. As Tim pulled the brown drip cap out I told him, "I want white..." and he] responded, "That IS white!" as he scraped off an eighth inch of silt...and we stood there and laughed until tears



ran down our cheeks--two guys in a maelstrom of mud, ruined hardware and millwork who could barely walk over the wreckage--but finding a good guffaw in the middle of it. Outdoors were snowplows shoveling mud back into the river which delivered it....

On the way back I drove by the Bethel State Police barracks...and all the squad cars were parked and our savvy and adaptable troopers were getting into tricked out jeeps with huge tires and survival equipment strapped to their sides...God bless them and their staying on duty and finding spontaneous way to better serve the public where cars cannot go--which right now is a good deal of the entire state. Just after the barracks I saw a convoy of at least a dozen huge utility trucks from Ontario who have come here to help us restore power--lined up along the road like a military operation...and realized we were not alone as a state either.

Getting the crew over the mountain was an adventure requiring intense study and discovery of the back roads between Northfield and Waits River...and I owe a debt of gratitude to my son Caleb (who is also apart time member of the crew) for leading our little convoy over washed out roads and detours around bridges to the main road over the mountain--still intact only because of its high altitude above the earlier raging waters below. I saw hundreds of culverts and bridges needing repair in only an hour's drive--and I know there are at least another thousand roads needing as much or more. The radio comes on telling me there are still communities entirely cut off from any provisions or transportation who are getting helicopter airlifts....with the roads smashed back into gravel whence they came. I also see excavators and dump trucks everywhere--knowing in a few days or weeks or months they may get to the cones that tell me which side of the precipice to drive on so I do not fall in where the cave in lies beneath the cracked asphalt.

There are way too many stories to tell--and it is hard to describe in words what eviscerates the heart...and the exhaustion through taking them in. I came back home and was looking forward to getting some work done and out town's list serve sends out an email asking for volunteers to haul away the remains of what belonged to some people in flooded homes in West Hartford VT--just up the White River from where we live--and particularly hard hit. The police stop me to be sure I have a reason to go in as i approach the flood zone... and it like entering a different world...houses with their faces torn off, mud oozing out of windows and doorways, and personal belongings covered with mud that are unrecognizable. I heard a woman screaming that she had no home, no clothes, and worst of all--no pictures left of anything pertaining to her life...it cut me in two to hear that and to realize that what she had lost was so much worse than the TV's, Keurig coffee machines and mass of mud covered slop filling the back of my pickup. I went back for another load after a run to the dump...and ran into the mother of a young man who practically lived at our house with my kids in high school...she recognized me and wanted a hug....

It was that simple really...I saw a lot of love today as so many did so much to begin healing our wounded land... and I knew once again that I am blessed to live here. It was hard to see that with the broken infrastructure and destroyed homes--but it is our people and our communities that generously give us the hope and resilience our hearts need and ache for today...for which I am thankful and therefore wish to share with you.

(From a e-mail sent on August 30th)

Restoration in East Barnard

by: *Virginia Schlabach*

We've witnessed so much heartbreaking destruction of homes, farms, businesses, roads, and bridges that sometimes it's hard to keep things in focus. I share these little vignettes from our village, a community that fortunately suffered very little damage except to one place, the little white frame hall that's at the heart of East Barnard life.

When the Broad Brook firemen hung the Fun Day banner on the East Barnard Community Hall in July, they could not know that the words "The Harbor" would become more than a village nickname from the distant past. During Hurricane Irene, flooding of the

Pomfret and Broad Brooks completely surrounded the hall so that it appeared to be in the midst of a wide brown sea and one might have easily moored a small boat at the porch. The night before Irene descended upon us, the Community Hall was alive with happy people. In the basement, diners sat at the long red-clothed tables under festive fairy lights and enjoyed the annual Smorgasbord Supper. Upstairs, shoppers looked over the wares on offer at the Community Club bazaar. And on the front lawn, Ralph Kurek in his signature top hat presided over the attic auction with good humor and pre-hurricane patter: "Now here's a DVD and a book. Tomorrow when the hurricane keeps you inside, this will be perfect! Who will give me a dollar?" It was a calm beautiful evening. Who could have imagined then that the next morning the grass on which we stood would be under water or that water inside would be lapping at the hems of the red tablecloths....

Fast forward a week. Abner and Janet and I are among the neighbors working together to remove the red tablecloths, which were fastened to the tables with duct tape. Hoping to salvage them, we pull carefully but the tape is tougher than we are and holes and rips appear. It's a losing battle, and the tablecloths go into the trash along with piles of other unsalvageable stuff. Fred and Abner tackle a dividing partition to tear out already-molding wallboard. I help to haul chairs outside for the power washers to clean. Other people are wiping them down and lugging them to the upper level to dry out. Everyone is wearing masks, even Micah who is the only kid on hand; he's not allowed inside the building, but he waits patiently on the swings while his parents work. Pam pushes a Zamboni-like floor washer around. The bleach squad scrubs the walls and the whole place smells like Clorox. Janet works with others in the kitchen, sorting what can be saved from what must be trashed. As the hot water heater was destroyed and the kitchen is a mess, I load all the silverware and several big roasters full of dishes into my car to take home. I spend the next two days sterilizing everything in bleach solution, then washing and hand drying each item. As I work my way through nearly 200 soup spoons, all needed for the 56th annual fire company Oyster Stew Supper - still hopefully scheduled for October 15 - I wonder how it can be possible to have the hall ready by then. Of course, I'm not alone in doing this "homework". Polly is washing the linens. Jenepher stops by with the electric food processor, which is still muddy despite repeated scrubblings, and we decide it has to be trashed. I've already thrown out all the utensils that can't be properly cleaned. We may need to hold a kitchen shower for the hall.

And now it's September 15. The hall basement has been cleaned and dried out, and carpentry repairs and painting of ceiling, walls, and floor are the next tasks for volunteers. Hillary Clinton coined the title "It Takes a Village", which is also an apt title for East Barnard, a strong little community that keeps on working together to make things happen. With sweat and determination coupled with hope (or vice versa), our hall will be restored and ready for that dinner one month from today!



photo taken by Roy Aloisio during the church trip to Groton State Park.

Grace Question

by: Carie Good

I notice a spot of red on the hillside, among the fading maples and white pines. Are the trees beginning to turn already? It is that time of year again... And autumn always means "back to school".

One of my favorite family pictures is of Sarah and Tim walking home after the first day of school, 1986, Sarah in 2nd grade, Tim in kindergarten. Barefoot on the sidewalk, holding hands, Sarah's shiny new patent leather shoes dangling and Tim's new bowtie askew. A friend had gifted us the shoes and bowtie, saying of course, everybody needs to dress up with something special for the very first day of school. That morning, on opening his eyes from sleep, Tim had so proudly announced to the world "Today is my first day of school!" The next morning, being the mathematician already, he eagerly announced upon waking "Today is my first second day of school!" The memory of this innocent wonder always brings a smile of joy to my mother-heart.

Somewhere, along the way, we all lose our innocent wonder – we encounter misery and injustice, and watch helplessly as tragedies unfold. We are betrayed

by those who are supposed to love us, friends and loved ones get sick and die, children suffer, terrible things happen in the world. We pray for healing and nothing happens. Where is God, how can a good God allow such things? If He made us, and loves us, oughtn't He intervene, or better yet, prevent pain, cruelty and misfortune? Don't we deserve better?? Isn't this is the demanding cry of our hearts, the underlying cry, when we ask God "Why?"; when we doubt His goodness and grace to us and demand justice for all?

This is the great question that baffles the generations. I'm sure I don't have a convincing answer, but I am intrigued with the notion that this dilemma is resolved only by re-connecting to our innocent wonder. G.K.Chesterton, an early 20th century English writer and Christian apologist, I think asked the better question. He once penned:

**Here dies another day
During which I have had eyes, ears, hands
And the great world round me;
And with tomorrow begins another.
Why am I allowed two?**

Longing for justice is the heart of Christ, I am sure, and I hope our hearts can continue to break for those who hurt, both at home and around the globe. But the insistence that grace and good outcomes ought to be present, and be present in my life, is moving away from the gift that is given: life itself -- which is the opportunity to grow, be changed, and offer a bit of Jesus' love into this broken world. I believe this is the true grace of which we are allowed to partake.

Perhaps real justice contains an undercurrent of wonder, and thanksgiving. I invite you to read the words of Chesterton once again, slowly, and let the question seep deep into your soul. May this be a new season of growing in gratitude and praise, for us all.

Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship

Located in the village of Taftsville, VT, one block south of Rt. 4 on Happy Valley Road.



Randy Good, Pastor

www.taftsvillechapel.org

Send your contributions for the Current to: samuel.carbaugh@gmail.com or contact a Newsletter Staff member: Carie Good, Janet North & Virginia Schlabach



‘Micah’s Crazy Quilt’ wins a prize

The quilt pictured was entered in the Billings Farm Museum’s 25th annual quilt show in July and won one of the three juror’s awards. Below is what I wrote about the quilt. Among the 13 people who helped with the hand quilting were five from Taftsville Chapel – Carie Good, Mary Guntz, Micah’s mom Janet, grandma Virginia, and grandpa Abner. After the show ends on September 25, the quilt and the award ribbon will go home with Micah (although he promises to lend the ribbon to Grandma on occasion). When one of the quilters asked Micah what he planned to do with the quilt when it was finished, he replied, “Why sleep on it, of course!” – Virginia Schlabach

The blocks in this quilt represent creative teamwork between a grandma and grandson during the summer and fall of 2010. Together my grandson Micah and I sorted through my scrap bag and fabric stash and he chose fabrics for his quilt. As the project moved along, friends also offered us fun fabrics from their collections. We spent many happy days deciding what should go into each block, starting with a focal patch or patches and adding scraps and strips to tie them together. Making each block was like doing a puzzle - only we were creating the puzzle. Although Micah chose not to sew, he faithfully ironed fabric and pressed seams. The blocks were completed by his 10th birthday in December and, after I had pieced the quilt, friends and family helped with the hand quilting in June 2011. This quilt speaks of love and friendship and has many stories to tell!

Offering Update:

by Tim Good

Hello everyone! The new fiscal year has started off well, especially given that we’ve missed three full weeks of offerings. Our weekly goal is \$1832, and we’ve come very close to hitting that target. I know things are unsettled and off-balance (to say the least) in the aftermath of the storm, Irene, but I just want to thank you all for your amazing continued support and generosity. Blessings!

July

3 - 2216

10 - BBC Joint Service (No Offering)

17 - 1860

24 - 1858

31 - 2536

August

7 - 2910

14 - Groton Camping (No Offering)

21 - 1765

28 - Irene (No Offering)

September

4 - 3335

11 - 3100

Weekly Budget: 1832

Weekly Avg: 1780

Total Budget to Date: 20152

Total Received to Date: 19580

Hospitality Committee:

Sunday Flowers

Thank you to everyone who has contributed flowers to our Sunday morning services over the past year. The Hospitality Committee invites you to continue bringing blooms to beautify our sanctuary as part of worshipping our God.

Heather Wolfe

BACK TO SCHOOL - 2011

Please post this list or tuck it into your Bible as a reminder to pray for these church family members:

STUDENTS

K-12:

Gabrielle Webber – Hartford High School - 12
Ben Beidler – Hartford High School School – 11
Victoria Dandurand - Hartford High School School – 11
Hayden Cox – Hartford High School - 11
Hannah Cox – Hartland Elementary – 8
Micah Schlabach – Barnard Academy - 5
Calvin McCrory – Dothan Brook Elementary – 3
Mabel McCrory – Dothan Brook Elementary – 2
Clara Swanson – Emerson Waldorf School – 1
Evelyn McCrory – Dothan Brook Elementary - K

College:

Laura Beidler – Eastern Mennonite University – Washington DC Study Service Semester - 4th year- biology/pre-med
Haylie Cox – Mary Mount University - 3rd year – computer science
Hunter Cox – St. John’s College – 3rd year
Emily Glick – University of Vermont – 3rd year – archaeology
Reuben Dandurand – Johnson State – 2nd year – biology
Max Halik – Gordon College - 1st year - engineering

Graduate School:

Heather Wolfe – Dartmouth College – 2nd year of 2-year Masters of Public Health degree program
Kristin Carbaugh – Plymouth State University – MEd program
Dave Swanson – Duke University Divinity School – 1st year – MDiv program

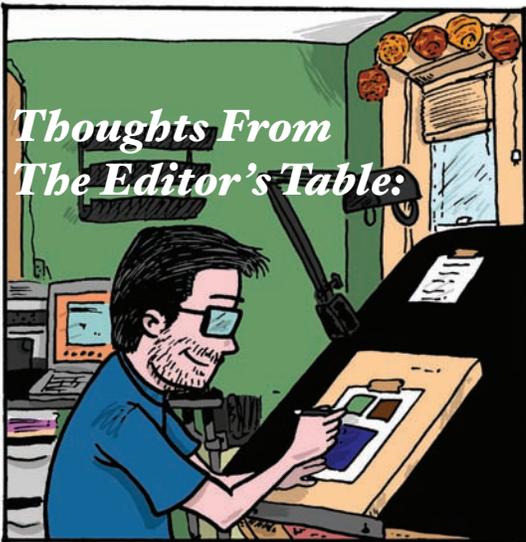
TEACHERS

Kristen Aloisio – Dartmouth College – teaching assistant, public health dept.
Melissa Ayers – Windsor Southeast - speech and language
Kristin Carbaugh – Crossroads Academy – Gr. 3
Skip Chalker – Mascoma Valley Regional High School – English
Allison Good – Black River High School/Middle School & Ludlow Elementary School - instrumental music
Lynda Knisley – Albert Bridge School – art, K-6; Mid-Vermont Christian School – art, gr. 5-12; art history
Nancy Pejouhy – Woodstock Union Middle School – math, gr. 8
Carol Whitney – Hartford High School – math
Nick Wolfe – Hartland Elementary – social studies, gr. 7-8

SCHOOL STAFF

Ann Chalker – Hartford High School – coordinator, special education program
Jan Collins - Upper Valley Music Center (music school) – office manager
Kevin Cox – Hartland Elementary School – dean of students
Tim Good - Dartmouth Medical School - web architect
Janet North – Woodstock Union High School – counseling secretary
Bob Rosenberger – Woodstock Union High School – day custodian
Janice Zook – Hartford School District – nurse

Hudson Cox is taking a gap year between high school and college, living in community and working at The Cedars, a community center in the Anacostia area of Washington DC.



Life Together

The events of a few weeks ago affected each of us differently. To some it came as a morning surprise, for others their lives were invaded in the night and forever changed. Through the aftermath we have seen neighbors, friends and fellow believers help in what way they can.

It reminded me of the power of community, to gather around one another as the body of Christ and ease the burdens, even as we carry our own. The blessing and miracle of the family we share together in

this little gathering of believers is something precious that no raging river or other event can easily wash away.

Often when I can't find words, I turn to poetry or music to see if someone more adept with expression has given voice to my emotions. This month, I have been reading a the works of American poet, T.S. Eliot, and a verse from his unfinished poem "Choruses from 'The Rock'" seemed to illuminate my feelings. It is a short verse, but I hope you enjoy it.

Blessings to you,
Sam Carbaugh

Excerpt from 'Choruses from "The Rock"' *by T.S. Eliot*

*What life have you if you have not life together?
There is no life that is not in community,
And no community not lived in praise of GOD.*