

Minot area congregations assist with recovery

Even with the homes of some congregation members flooded and some church buildings also suffering flood damage, the churches of Minot and the surrounding area are still playing a key role in flood recovery and support.

At First Lutheran Church in Minot, Pastor Ken Nelson is senior pastor at a church that received flood waters in the parsonage and three buildings, one of which took on four feet of water in the basement. The furnaces were badly damaged and needed replacement, elevator controls were destroyed and asbestos tile surfaced that had to be professionally removed.

Meanwhile, the house where Pastor Ken and his family lived was close to the river and was inundated with nearly seven feet of water on the main floor.

“We were fortunate because Lutheran Social Services got us a team of volunteers and, along with a group from the congregation, they helped us gut the main floor of our house,” Pastor Ken says. “Other volunteers from Lutheran Disaster Response pulled wiring on the main floor and put in two windows. Another group installed a patio door and windows to get the house buttoned up so it could be heated during the winter.”

*We see the face of Christ
in the volunteers...*

*Pastor Ken Nelson
First Lutheran Church, Minot*

Lutheran was paired with Zion Lutheran Church in the south end of town where members worshipped through Labor Day.

Reaching out

First Lutheran’s work in flood recovery started almost immediately after the flood, which affected about 190 of its 550 families.

“Many people had someone who took them in so they didn’t need to live in shelters.” Pastor Ken says. “And those who weren’t hosting somebody were letting people store



Jessica Ackerman, left, helped Shantel Lessman, right, and Katrina Williams, pick out items during the Tree of Hope Fair at Minot’s First Lutheran Church. Ackerman coordinated the event that supplied donated Christmas decorations to flood families. Photo by Kim Fundingsland/MDN

belongings in their garages. It was amazing how people reached out to one another.”

Damaged or not, the church members were anxious to help their neighbors as much as possible.

Leading the way

“Even at first when everyone was in a state of shock, the church council committed to allowing volunteers to stay in our two rental houses

because the tenants had decided to leave Minot,” he says.

“We’ve had folks step up to supply the volunteers’ breakfast food; a Boy Scout troupe laid temporary carpet in the basement; so many people have pitched in,” he reports.

Flood takes a toll

As a pastor, Ken is very aware of the toll that the flood has taken on the people of Minot:

“The construction work is important, but one of the most important things that Lutheran Social Services is doing is to make available the spiritual and mental health counseling for those who need it. To whatever extent that this can be provided to supplement our work as pastors, it’s so very important.”

Pastor Ken is grateful for all the volunteers that have helped at his house, his church and the many homes in the Minot area that needed so much done.

“Those volunteers are giving us so much. We see the face of Christ in the volunteers, and it sustains us,” he says.

Pastor Ken urges that anyone able come to Minot to help rebuild, “for two days or two weeks.” 🙏