



## A Nightmare Revisited

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*Crew from Zion United, Brodheadsville, Rescues Homes Twice*

Excerpted from articles by Mark Staples, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

For elderly residents of Raubsville, Pa., a small town along the Delaware just south of Easton, April 3, 2005, was a nightmare revisited. Rampaging Delaware River floodwaters immersed their simple bungalows for the second time in six months.

The first flood hit on September 18, 2004.

In mid-October 2004, Mark Staples observed the clean-up in Raubsville and wrote, "In the middle of a dumpster along Route 611 in this community, a volunteer spies a ruined doll, once some child's cherished plaything – now just another piece of flood-contaminated trash. It is a somehow poignant sign of the disaster that has impacted 47 Pennsylvania counties comprised of communities like this one. It was a nasty calling card left by the remnants of Hurricane Ivan. The damage was done in a day. No one knows how long the recovery will take."

Among those whose homes were flooded on September 18 were Ike and Helen Repsher. The basement and part of the living quarters of the Repshers' house along Canal Road was submerged in the flood. "The floor of the main living area is spongy and will need to be replaced along with many of the dwelling's walls," writes Staples. "Ike Repsher invested \$1,300 of his meager savings to purchase a heater to warm his house so he and his wife could continue to live



there. He hopes volunteers and construction helpers can begin to repair his home's interior in a week or two."

That was October 2004. On March 5, 2005, twenty believers, who were among those who worked in the flood muck and mire of Tropical Storm Ivan's aftermath, gathered for a simple service of thanksgiving in the restored bungalow of Ike and Helen Repsher.

The Rev. William Rex, pastor of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Ferndale, Pa., blessed the house with this prayer: "We come together this day to celebrate your blessed protection over those who dwell in your house, seek your continued blessing on this house and those who live within its walls. Also, we want to praise your name for those who heard the call to care for and tend to the needs of those affected by disaster. We lift up those who provided resources and skill to rebuild lives devastated by disaster. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Next door to the Repshers, evidence remained of how much still needs to be done to fully recover from Ivan's aftermath," writes Staples on that March day. "A dedicated crew of workers led by Kevin Bochantin and Sandi Boyer from Zion United Lutheran Church in Brodheadsville, Pa., has begun to 'turn the corner' in restoring the home of Lou DiNoso, a neighbor of the Repshers. Today they were installing sheetrock to the walls in a back room and making repairs to the damaged kitchen. For Lou DiNoso, a blessing of the house celebration will hopefully come later in the spring."

On April 2, the crew from Zion United, Brodheadsville, completed the work on Lou DiNoso's home. On April 3, all their work—and more—was wiped out by the second flood in six months.

The second flooding was intensified not only by heavy local rains but also by nearly five inches of downpours that fell over the previous weekend upstream in the Pocono Mountains. The Repshers, whose home was again severely damaged, and Lou DiNoso had plenty of company in misery April 3. The second flood was easily the worst in 50 years along the Delaware. Many victims in Riegelsville, just south of Raubsville, lived in properties that had not been impacted this way since 1955.

The stalwart work crew from Brodheadsville began for the

second time to carry out repairs at Lou DiNoso's home along Canal Road in Raubsville. "We're pretty determined," said Kevin Bochantin. He explained that the Zion contracting team has undertaken projects in points as distant as North Carolina and Arkansas. "We go wherever God calls us to serve," Bochantin said. "We've been given so much, and it is a way we respond to what God has given us. It's a way of proclaiming God's love to others.

"This year instead of going out of state we'll be working around here," he added.

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