

# TORNADO TIMES

Keeping You Current on Joplin, Missouri Relief Efforts



## RESURRECTING JOPLIN

### NOTE FROM THE PASTOR...

Merry Christmas!

Philippians 1:3 says, *"I thank my God every time I remember you."*

How true that is as I think of you!

Your love, support, service and generosity in the wake of the May 22<sup>nd</sup> Joplin tornado has poured great courage into our hearts. The kindness that you have shown us is nothing short of spectacular. Thank you!

Just as our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world at a time when things were particularly desperate... you came to Joplin when we were particularly desperate. Words cannot adequately express the depth of our gratitude. When one-third of our city was ripped from the face of the map and so many loved ones were lost...you came to our rescue! Perhaps you sent a check or clothes or food or toiletries. Perhaps you joined a chainsaw crew or medical team.

Maybe you are a plumber, electrician, cook, carpenter or musician and you lent your talents to the cause. Could it be that you were one of the folks that dove into the relief effort to clean-up the countless tons of debris?

Whatever the case, you were especially quick to show us love, comfort and prayer. We will always be indebted to you.

**I STAND AMAZED...when I consider the speed and selflessness with which you have given your aid.** Estimates of our recovery time have been reduced from 5-10 years to now 2-4 years! Universities are sending research crews to study why Joplin is so "resilient" in the face of such a daunting calamity. The truth is that it is because people have banded together for the love of God and their fellow human beings and said, *"By God's grace, we can do great things!"*

**Friends, Joplin has made great strides in our recovery, but there is still a long way to go.** We still need your help...whether you send a check, bring a work crew, help lead VBS or a Block Party, cook meals, or bring supplies; we're ready for you! Need housing? Please, give us a call...space is going fast.

**Whatever God is challenging you to do be prepared to be amazed.** When the Lord is in it we can expect great things to happen!

With Love in Christ,  
Pastor Cliff

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newcreation  
CHURCH

417.782.8200

# 12 Houses in 2012!!!

We need your help! We're planning on building 12 houses in 2012 for people in Joplin who are underinsured. Our master carpenters are ready for as many skilled volunteers as possible.

We are also praying for partners who will help support this project. We can build a well crafted home for half of what it would cost on the open market! We are working hard to raise \$680,000 to see this project through!



## CHRIST PREVAILS

**Our Story**...As the New Creation middle school youth group huddled in the basement of the church on May 22nd none of us could imagine what was happening outside. Ann, one of our parents, just made it in the back door with the last fifty tacos Taco Bell would serve before it was wiped out. Outside was a torrent of wind, rain and hail as the sirens wailed in the background. Then, at 5:41 p.m. a horrifying rumble like a giant freight train began overhead that wouldn't stop for about twenty minutes. A metal pipe clattered across the front of the building unnerving the leaders. Checking on the noise our pastor saw a tree fly by the front of the building and he knew something big was happening. Returning to the basement the group prayed for safety in total darkness.

Emerging from the building the group could only see downed trees and had no idea that the beastly winds we heard brought the most deadly tornado to Joplin that our country has experienced in sixty years. We were blind to the multiple vortexes that had towered 70,000 feet in the sky and the fourteen mile-long and at some points, one-mile wide path of destruction that it had left behind. We didn't know that 162 people were dead or 22,000 cars, 8,000 homes and hundreds of businesses were destroyed.

As Pastor Cliff slowly drove some of the students home in his truck the true picture of what had happened began to emerge. At first the students nervously laughed at trampolines that were tossed about like Frisbees. Their tone slowly changed as they observed downed power lines, trees, and chimneys. They were

more staggered when they drove past Main Street only to discover many businesses were no longer there. It was most sobering to them when they saw a woman pulled from the wreckage of her home clinging to a baby carrier and blanket crying out *"where is my baby?"* No one could calm her nor could they find the child.

So many familiar landmarks were missing... churches (30), fire stations (2), schools (8), parks, businesses and homes. Our main business district on Range Line Road was unrecognizable as Home Depot, Walmart, I-HOP, Aldi's, and so many other stores were a mangled mess of rubble. Academy Sports had a dumpster from Sonic that was launched into its façade which it dented before dropping into the entry and bouncing around like a pin-ball machine killing nineteen people.

**...Story Continued on Page 3.**



## A CITY CUT IN TWO!

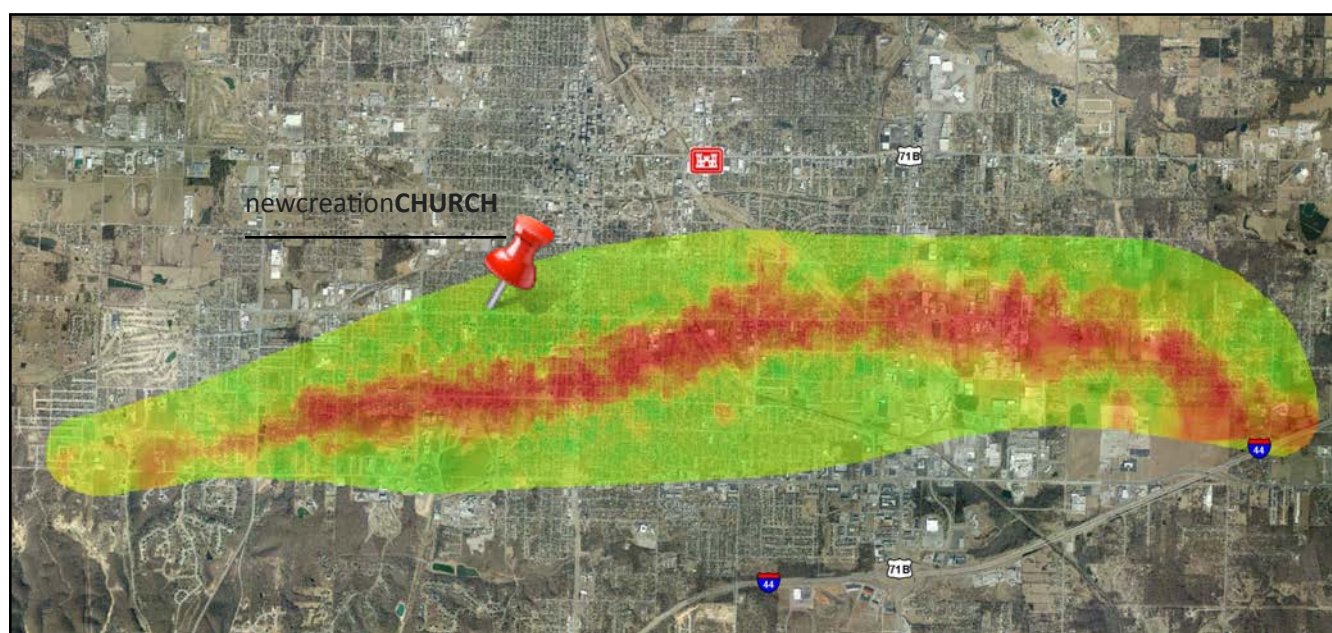
A short time later Pastor Cliff made his way back to the church, but found no one there. Traveling on foot he made his way through the tangle of trees, wires and what was left of people's homes.

The dark greenish sky continued to arc with lightening as emergency vehicles wove their way through tiny openings in the streets. The blinking lights and sound of door ajar bells added to the surreal atmosphere where people openly wept and animals whimpered. Although there were search and rescue crews pouring in

There were so many heroes in the early hours after the tornado. Obviously, the rescuers, but also the thousands of men and women who poured into Joplin with chainsaws and shovels to clear the streets and comfort the hurting. Among those crews was an angel named Randy who had led the tornado relief effort for his hometown of Stockton, Missouri just six years ago. Over the next two weeks his advice and assistance were invaluable!

a good thing we had made a Sam's Club run the day before the tornado... people were harried, hungry and terribly frightened!

**Within days of the tornado we had hundreds of cell phone calls.** Supplies and volunteers began to pour in from all over. One of the first came from the Colonial Presbyterian Church in Kansas City. "What do you need?" they asked. "Five toilets and someone to install them" was the response. "Done!" was the answer! This was the kind of conversation that has taken place with



from all over the four-state area there were no road signs to guide them.

Orders would be given to search addresses but it would take precious time to guess which ruin to search! The two most observable landmarks for the rescuers were St. John's Hospital (which was twisted four inches off its foundation!) and, strikingly, the large cross of St. Mary's (shown in the top left hand corner of the front page of this newsletter). Everywhere, as far as the eye could see there was nothing, but devastation. People covered with blood and mud wandered aimlessly about searching for loved ones and what few possessions they could find. We were in utter shock and in some ways we still are.

**The day after the tornado our lines of communication were still very limited and it was hard to find many of our members as their homes had simply vanished.** Nevertheless, a small crew of people gathered with chainsaws, axes and handsaws. Progress was slow and the weather was unrelenting. Predictions of more twisters seemed imminent and so the New Creation youth groups went into action spreading the word to hundreds of homes that the church would be available to everyone as a shelter in case of another tornado.

**Later that evening when the sirens sounded again, people came in droves from all over the neighborhood.** They brought their children and pets...pit bulls and pythons, squeaky dogs and cats. It's

churches from all over the country and over every denominational background imaginable!

**It quickly became apparent that New Creation would become a distribution point for food and supplies as well as a place for relief workers to spend the night.** Our 24,000 square foot ancient building was quickly outfitted for action. Joseph Hobbs, who lost his job at Home Depot, took over as our Director of Relief Operations. We quickly acquired more staff to help with the crisis. Some of our staff were given paid leave from their companies to join our team.

## HEALING

WE FULLY RECOGNIZE THAT THE HEALING FOR JOPLIN AND IT'S FAMILIES HAS JUST BEGUN. FOR MANY OF US, IT WILL BE YEARS BEFORE LIFE RESEMBLES "LIFE"! EVEN WHEN THAT HAPPENS, IT WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN. OUR HOPE AND PRAYER IS THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO PARTNER WITH NEWCREATION AS WE SEEK TO BE A LONG TERM PLACE OF HOPE AND HEALING FOR OUR COMMUNITY, IT'S FAMILIES, ESPECIALLY THEIR CHILDREN!

*"The greatest test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christian Theologian*



Our ability to respond quickly and effectively to the monumental crisis facing us is due, in large part, to an "angel named Randy" who showed up on our door step toting a chainsaw. It just so happened that Randy had headed up the tornado relief effort in his home town of Stockton, Missouri six or seven years ago.

Today New Creation Church continues to distribute food and supplies, house relief workers, build sheds for people rebuilding and stage teams of volunteers for rehabbing and rebuilding homes throughout Joplin. We have expanded our after school ministry to a three-day format which includes Bible stories, tutoring, games, crafts, and a family-style dinner for about 80 children. This will double in the new year.



HE MAKES ALL THINGS NEW...  
IN HIS TIME!  
- ECCL 3:11

## UPCOMING EVENTS

## How You Can Help!

### SHED PROJECT



Over the past three months New Creation has built nearly 40 high quality wooden storage sheds for people moving back to their properties. These sheds are given to people who lack a place to secure their equipment and possessions from theft and the weather. These sheds are constructed by volunteers under the direction of our master carpenter. We are hoping to build another 100 sheds in the year to come at \$650 per shed (these cost three times as much on the open market).

### 12 IN '12



We need your help! We're planning on building 12 houses in 2012 for people in Joplin who are underinsured. Our master carpenters are ready for as many skilled volunteers as possible. We are also praying for partners who will help support this project. We can build a well crafted home for half of what it would cost on the open market! We are working hard to raise \$680,000 to see this project through!

### SILVER & GOLD PROJECT



It may sound a little crazy, but we're collecting "unwanted" silver, gold, and precious gems to help repair and rebuild the homes of those who were underinsured after the tornado. We've already helped many people with repairing their homes, but now is the time to start building and we'll need all the help we can possibly get. Thanks to our on-site master carpenters and the help of many volunteers we will be able to build homes for less than half the normal cost. Your contributions of silver, gold, precious gems or cash can go a long way toward the relief effort. We'll be glad to accept coins, jewelry, gems and other precious metals and stones and in return we will provide you with a tax receipt for fair market value and proper verification that your metals or gems have been applied to the rebuilding effort. We recommend that you insure anything you ship.

### INTERNSHIPS



**Would you like to make a long-term difference in the relief effort?** New Creation is currently welcoming applications for internships and staff positions lasting between one month and a year. Ministry opportunities include general relief work, administration, public relations, children and family ministries, youth and young adult ministries, special events, construction and food prep. Interns will participate in special education experiences which offer training in various aspects of ministry and relief work. New Creation is not able to offer cash compensation for these positions, but will provide room and board. Applications are available on-line or by calling New Creation at 417-782-8200. For more information speak with Pastor Cliff.

### RESERVATIONS - Individuals and Groups



Individuals, Families, and Groups are welcome to stay at New Creation while participating in the relief effort. Reservations must be made in advance as we have limited accommodations. Please call as far in advance as possible as our space is limited. Normally we are able to offer a cot, shower and use of the kitchen facilities. Men and women are required to stay in separate dorms. Groups are required to assist with daily chores around the facility as well as a thorough final clean-up. Call Lisa Keele at 417-782-8200 to make a reservation. We will need to know how many workers, their special skills, and what kinds of projects you would prefer to participate in. Because of the costs incurred to New Creation Church we suggest a minimum contribution of about \$10 per person per night. Each group is required to provide their own food.

### FURNITURE DISTRIBUTION



A huge note of thanks goes to the Sauder Company for donating two semi-tractor trailer loads of brand new furniture. We will be distributing this furniture on January 14<sup>th</sup> and would gladly welcome the help of any groups or individuals who would be willing to help us deliver it. Please call Lisa at 417-782-8200 ASAP if you can help!

# THERE'S MORE TO DO!

## FINANCIAL NEEDS...

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### HOME REPAIRS

We do almost everything! Including plumbing, roofing, yard seeding, painting, dry walling, electrical, flooring, and siding. We can only do what your contributions allow.

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### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

We are able to reach up to 150 children a day. It costs us approximately \$175 per day to run our programs. This includes food, transportation, staff and event fees.

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### RELIEF STAFFING

We are funding positions in several areas to assist with relief work... Relief Director, Project Manager, Front Desk, Distribution Intake, Certified Educator for our tutoring program, and children's ministries (we work with many children in the FEMA trailer camps... a remote location, surrounded by fences with no programs or places for children to play). We are a small church in a highly needy neighborhood just three blocks north of the heart of the devastated area. Our staff costs between \$6 and \$8 an hour.

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### MEALS

We serve between 80 and 300 meals a day out of our small kitchen depending on the season. These meals are for children who have been affected by the tornado or live in poverty as well as volunteer relief workers. We estimate our costs for the coming year to be approximately \$30,000.

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### GENERAL FUND

Everyday represents new challenges. We try hard to turn on a dime to meet people's needs. Undesignated funds help us to move quickly and efficiently. We also have plenty of basic wear and tear on our facility... some things break... equipment needs to be replaced. Utility bills make it sometimes hard to keep up. Your help in this area can go a long way!

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### DISTRIBUTION

Every week we distribute canned goods, toiletries, supplies of all sorts, coats, gloves, portable heaters, air conditioners, tools, furniture...you name it. It's not uncommon for to run out of critical items.

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## CHRISTMAS CHEER...

*What a wonderful celebration! We owe a lot of thanks to several churches and individuals very generously donated children's toys and coats for our Christmas luncheon. Parents were able to "shop" for items that could be placed under the tree at home. We were also delighted to give families Nativity sets. One family was so over joyed that they left with tears in their eyes!*

## "I LOVE YOU JOPLIN"

### A Poem By Michael Arrondondo

*Take my heart, hear it beat  
Walk with me, be my feet.  
Hold my hand, so that I may stand  
Look into my eyes, so that you may  
feel my cries.*

*Broken, beat down—a lost kingdom  
looking for its crown.  
Shredded and torn, a people waiting  
to be reborn.*

*They pray to rise from the ashes,  
They wish to forget the sound of the  
crashes.  
A city full of many fears  
Stains left from every tear.  
Beauty all around, it's rising from the  
ground.*

*Can you hear it?  
It's the sound of the people,  
They sing a battle cry of love.*

*They open up their arms  
And for a moment they feel like they  
can fly.  
And for a second they are soaring  
through the sky.*

*They shine brighter than any star  
They together will travel far—to a  
place called heaven.  
Where all the pain has been washed  
away.*

*For just a second they feel a sense of  
hope, maybe it will stay.*

*As one voice they scream together,  
community,  
As one voice they yell together for a  
new reality.*

*Then they must face the struggle.  
But they are stronger than ever,  
praying through the night.  
That through the darkness, would  
shine a forever light.*

### Block Parties in 2012

Last year we sponsored many block parties to help encourage folks in the neighborhood. This next year we would like to do the same. We suggest that your block party include some kickin' music, food for one and all (we have three event grills), and carnival type games for the kids. Creative variations are always welcome!

We ask that your team help with set-up and tear-down. One important key is to have people mingle with those who attend...relational stuff is really, really important!

If you interested in helping, please contact us AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

**417-782-8200!!!**



## **BUILDING... for the future!**

**Many of you are aware that New Creation has been attempting to purchase our current facility.**

By God’s grace we have finally agreed on a price of \$170,000 for the building and parking lot across the street. This is a huge challenge financially for our congregation. At the moment we have \$26,000 for a down payment, but we are praying that we will be able to raise enough money to pay cash. We would be deeply grateful for any assistance in meeting this goal. We have 90-day window of opportunity to meet this goal.

**IN THE TRENCHES...**our facility is located in a neighborhood teaming with low income families with few fathers present, high drug use and a

high rate of child abuse. We are just three blocks from the heart of the devastation where nothing is left from the tornado. Our facility allows us to hold a vibrant ministry in an area of the city where most churches have been destroyed, pulled out or whose ministry has greatly diminished.

**Why don’t we build a new facility instead?** Primarily because of our current mission field, but even if we wanted to build a new facility we would have a hard time affording it!

Please pray about partnering with us in this ministry to a community that is in desperate need of the gospel and love of Jesus Christ! Please send any gifts to:

**New Creation Church  
1831 South Connor Ave.  
Joplin, Missouri 64804  
(ATTN: Jean Seibert)**

## **OUR VISION...**

**“PASSION  
FOR CHRIST,  
COMPASSION  
FOR PEOPLE.”**

## **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Pastor Cliff Mansley**  
SENIOR PASTOR

**Jean Seibert**  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASST.

**Erik Winston**  
YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS PASTOR

**Lisa Keele**  
RELIEF COORDINATOR

**Dan Hanschu &  
Dr. Scott Brehm**  
ELDERS

**newcreationCHURCH**

**1831 S. CONNOR AVE.  
JOPLIN, MO 64804  
417.782.8200**

