

Dear Carson,

I want to thank you on behalf of New Hope Presbytery's Disaster Committee and the Session of Neuse Forest Presbyterian Church for the deployment of a Presbytery Disaster Early Response Team to New Bern this last week.

What a wonderful presence they have been for the Church and the community in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. This team, hosted by West New Bern Presbyterian Church, set to work immediately mucking out houses in collaboration with Crisis Clean Up and help Neuse Forest begin the long and arduous task of repairing and then turning the Education Building into a Volunteer Hosting Site.

These are both significant milestones for New Bern and Craven County. Crisis Cleanup is a National Coordination Network for assisting communities to clear debris and start the process of "muck and gut" in the aftermath of a disaster. They only operate for 6 to 8 weeks after the disaster, typically well before the community organizes long term recovery. Your team was timely in responding and such a welcome presence. It is hard for a community to start the process of debris clearance without encouragement of others working alongside, and in the case of the elderly, sometimes instead of the homeowner or renter. There are many here in Craven county who send their special THANK YOU for the work of the team.

Neuse Forest Presbyterian Church is especially grateful. They are a small congregation (24) whose youngest member is 68. The storm pulled the shingles off the roof of their Education Building and poured rain into the interior, ruining ceilings and flooring tiles. The team has battened down the roof tarp, cleared the debris of rugs, furniture and tiles from the building and begun the repairs of the floors. Your team has literally been an answer to fervent prayer! . The scripture passage, "You will be called Repairer of the Breach, Restorer of Streets of Dwelling", certainly applies to the Presbytery of the James Early Response Team.

The Session has voted to turn the 6500 square foot building into a Volunteer Hosting Site where future teams from the Presbytery of the James and others can stay while they are in Craven County and New Bern to help families rebuild their homes and their lives

Again, thank you for the visionary action of the Presbytery of the James to get this recovery rolling... Grace and peace, John