

# First Presbyterian Church serves in Henryville

August 2013

*Photo and story by Carol Ann Pattengale*

"Everyone remembers what it feels like to turn on the news and see devastation and destruction from tornadoes across the U.S. and around the world. Most of us will remember hearing about the small town of Henryville IN that was completely leveled in March of 2012. The tornado, classified as an EF-4, stayed on the ground for around fifty miles and killed at least three people. It stretched through the Ohio River Valley, destroying towns like New Pekin, Fredricksburg, Marysville and Henryville in Indiana. It also tore through West Liberty, Kentucky and numerous towns in Ohio. This is enough to make most people ask, "What can I do?" and "How can I help?" The answer to that question for one Sturgis church is, "When can we come?"



"Presbyterian Disaster Assistance enables congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crisis and catastrophic events.

"Every year the First Presbyterian Church of Sturgis sends a group of people ranging in age from fourteen to eighty on a mission trip to an affected area of the Midwest. Last year the group, in an attempt to do whatever they could, visited West Liberty, Kentucky but now over a year later they found that help was still required in the Henryville area.

"On March 8, 2012 a long-term recovery group known as March2Recovery was formed to assist with the damage assessment and rebuild process. When the Sturgis church called looking for work, the nonprofit organization happily invited them to come to Henryville. So it was set that on August 4th, 2013 the group of 26 (along with four teenagers from Louisville, KY who joined them in Henryville) travelled to Southern Indiana where they spent a week staying at a local church while they worked in the Henryville area.

"Every morning they split into four groups and tackled the work assigned to them by March2Recovery for each job site/home. All totaled the First Presbyterian Church Mission Trippers worked on five homes, by back-filling the terrace area, painting, removing damaged siding and replacing with new siding on two homes, building steps, porches or decks on three homes, installing windows and insulating and skirting a modular home. They put in over 1,063 hours on the different worksites (the equivalent of one person working eight-hour days for 6 1/2 months) but there is still work to be done.

"Some families still have not been able to move back into their homes over a year after the storm passed through, but March2Recovery is hopeful that they could have all the homes they assessed finished and their families moved back in by this coming Thanksgiving!

"The Sturgis First Presbyterian Church is proud and very thankful to have been able to send such hardworking and successful groups to represent them annually since 2002. Every effort, every nail pounded in and every word spoken in support becomes the foundation for helping people affected by a disaster to start over! They are grateful for the opportunity to give back to those in need in many and various ways and are happily signing up their volunteers for the next currently undetermined destination the first week of August, 2014."