

Trinity Presbyterian Church team in El Reno – Shared Mission

Trinity Missions headed to El Reno, Okla., to help rebuild damage caused by 2013's tornadoes. Here is one member's account:

"Driving through Moore, OK, and then into El Reno to the West, Dennis Watts and I were somewhat surprised at the lack of visible damage from the storms as viewed from the roadway. This I would suppose is a testament to the incredible recovery effort that has been underway now for almost a year.

The Trinity Presbyterian Church team quickly connected with a trio of ladies from Connecticut who were on their second mission trip to the area, and as it happened, were assigned to work with our group for the week.

The professionalism and good organization of the local disaster team was quickly apparent, and we would continue to see evidence of their skills throughout the week. During opening remarks, it was explained that last year's devastation in the area was the result of not one but two category 4/5 tornados that hit just days apart. The El Reno storm was described as 2-½ miles wide with wind speeds of 300 mph. This simply defies comprehension.

Wesley United Methodist Church provided sleeping, bath, and kitchen facilities for the week and proved to be a convenient location to the job sites we were assigned. Church personnel were very gracious.

Breakfasts were taken in the kitchen facilities at the church. Days began and ended with prayer, and a devotional message was made part of each breakfast gathering.

Work days typically began at 8:30 – 9:00 and lasted until 4 – 5. The TPC team was split into two groups with one team doing roof work and the other assigned to interior renovation at a second location. The interior team (bathrooms/bedroom renovation) was teamed up with the three missionaries from Connecticut.

At the end of the day Wednesday, the homeowner was able to see the progress being made in her home and was visibly lifted. The Connecticut team leader was also able to spend some one-on-one time this day with the homeowner, which further lifted her spirits and was great to see. We ended the day joining with the homeowner and family in prayer, and the children were presented with gifts provided by the Connecticut ladies. We were all warmed by the experience.

Thursday was spent doing further finishing work in all rooms, and early afternoon the Connecticut team departed to catch their flight back north. All of the TPC team left impressed with the strong mission orientation and Christ centered approach these ladies brought with them to Oklahoma. It was a pleasure to share this mission experience with them.

Phil, Dennis, and Bob took Friday morning to do as much final finishing work on the rooms as time would allow. We departed at noon to connect with the other team members and leave for McKinney. Most of what we hoped would be accomplished during our week was completed and made ready for the next crew to take closer to full finish. Our sense was that shortly this homeowner would finally have her full home back together.

I found it very satisfying to be part of the TPC team making this trip and to contribute to helping this El Reno homeowner recover. It was equally satisfying to observe the commitment and work being done locally by the disaster team in Oklahoma. These professionals have been working tirelessly for a year to help put these communities back together and deserve all the praise in the world.

I came away from this experience with new skills, and a better appreciation of the joy one derives from the act of helping others. My body was tired at the end of the trip but it was a good kind of tired. I am glad to have had the opportunity to participate in this effort with my Trinity family and look forward to assisting in future mission efforts.



Volunteer team member /author Bob



Volunteer team member Dennis



Volunteer team member Phil and a volunteer from CT

*Story by George O. "Bob" Wilcox, Trinity Presbyterian Church in McKinney, Texas
Photos submitted by Phil Darby*