

TWENTY-SEVEN DIOCESAN CHURCHES PARTICIPATE IN MISSIONS

Two mission trips were established by the Diocese of West Michigan this past February. Many parishes individually sponsored mission trips previous to this year. This was the first attempt to establish mission trips on a Diocesan wide basis.

The two sites picked for the missions were New Orleans and Long Beach, Mississippi. The Church, through Episcopal Relief and Development, has a long term commitment to the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Katrina. Besides the Gulf Coast, E.R.D. provides disaster relief and recovery in forty countries to over 2,000,000 people. Go to the E.R.D. web site er-d.org for more information.

Diocesan Deacons made parish visits to speak of the contribution missions make to parish life. On many occasions, parishioners with previous Gulf Coast experience joined the Deacons.

Over seventy Diocesan parishioners have answered the call for the missions. The first mission was to New Orleans in May. Thirty-seven volunteers spent a week repairing three homes. In one location, a family was living in the garage behind the house during reconstruction. Volunteers had the opportunity to get to know the family as they worked. Other Diocesan parishes from around the nation also helped rebuild the house. The home owner sent our Diocesan volunteers a thank you letter as the family of nine moved into their renovated home this summer. This would not have been possible without the volunteers and the financial support of Episcopal Relief and Development.

Forty-four volunteers from around the Diocese are scheduled for the September Mississippi mission trip. The Church has erected a one hundred bed facility named Camp Coast Care. Early after Katrina, the Camp was a medical, food, and clothing distribution center. The primary focus of the Camp is now home rehabilitation. More information is on the web at campcoastcare.com.

Anyone interested in participating in a mission should contact Terry Dorcy at 269-349-3625. On the web, the address is tjdorcy@aol.com. The Diocese also has a link on its web site, edwm.org. Financial donations for the mission should be sent to the Diocesan Office located at 535 South Burdick, Suite # 1, 49007. Checks should be made out to the Diocese of West Michigan, and specify "hurricane relief" on the notation line. `