

Clifton Presbyterian Church Hosts 262 Flood Relief Volunteers

From July to October, up to about seventeen Weaverland Disaster Service volunteers a week have stayed at Clifton Presbyterian Church. They are Mennonites helping with the rebuilding and repair of houses damaged by the June 23, 2016 flood in Greenbrier County. Their current leader is Moses Martin who is from Myerstown in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania.



The Mennonite people in these work crews come mostly from Lancaster and Lebanon Counties of Pennsylvania with a few individuals from other towns in Pennsylvania. In addition, two groups came from Virginia, one from New York, and one from Missouri. Their occupations included, for the most part, farmers, carpenters/construction workers, mechanics, landscapers, and electricians. Some of their other occupations and talents were butcher, logger, farrier, teacher, watchmaker, and baker. The groups from Virginia were unique for they included several young women as workers.



Their beds and cots fill most of the Sunday school rooms. They brought their own refrigeration unit on wheels to park by the church, and all meals are cooked in the church kitchen. Two or three married couples are usually included the group. Their dining, recreation, and worship space is in the fellowship hall. The Clifton congregation and their Mennonite guests have coexisted quite well although the work crews usually come on Sunday evening and leave Friday after work.

Clifton Presbyterian Church choir member, Larry Davis, likes to tell the story that during a Wednesday evening choir rehearsal in the sanctuary, eight young men from Lancaster County slipped into the balcony to listen. One of the hymns rehearsed was that invigorating African-American spiritual, "Every Time I Feel the Spirit." The following night as Larry walked into the church for a visit with them, he heard a most excellent a cappella rendition of that same hymn in four-part male harmony. He also joined in with them on a few hymns from their hymn book, and was given the opportunity to sample their Lancaster County whoopie pies.