

# In Ellicott City, raging waters remembered one year later

ELLCOTT CITY – A dozen faith communities in Howard County came together at St. Paul Church in Ellicott City July 30 to remember the devastation that ravaged this quaint historic town last summer.

Sun-filled skies were quite the juxtaposition from last July, when a severe storm dropped six inches of rain in just hours, turning Main Street into a raging river. Building foundations were nearly washed away, and power lines dangling feet above the ground effectively cut off the area.

Throughout it all, St. Paul Church became a sanctuary of shelter.

Led by faith leaders from 12 churches representing the Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran and other Christian faiths, worshipers filled St. Paul Church for the hour-long ecumenical prayer service, which featured a combined choir.

Father Warren Tanghe, pastor of St. Paul Church, led the opening procession. As each faith leader approached the altar, rocks from the Patapsco River painted with words such as “Storm,” “Pain,” “Faith” and “Hope” were placed in a basket. Worshipers were given smaller rocks as a reminder of what the community endured.

An emotional moment came when Monica Fabbri, who was raised at St. Paul, and vice chair of the volunteer group, One EC (Ellicott City) Recovery Project, offered a tearful reflection. She spoke of the shock and despair of many residents, unable to use their vehicles, who attended the community dinners her group coordinated.

Wearing her “EC Strong” shirt, Peg Lawrence, a parishioner of St. John’s Episcopal Church, experienced the full impact of the storm while driving home from Pasadena.

“It was unreal,” she said.

Song selections included “Where There Is Charity,” “The Rivers of Life” (based on Psalm 46) and “By Your Hands We Are Saved.” Scripture passages, which described

water, earthquakes and compassion, were read by Father Tanghe and other clergy.

A litany prayer led by Rev. Wilhelma Street of Mount Zion United Methodist Church and D.C. Veale, minister for missions coordination at Glen Mar United Methodist Church, was one of the more poignant moments, as prayers were offered for first responders, government officials, contractors, utility crews, volunteers, in addition to three who died as a result of the storm.

“What a great way to evangelize,” said John Papania, St. Paul’s business manager and one of the coordinators of the ecumenical prayer service.

“There was a real sense we belonged together,” Father Tanghe told the Catholic Review. “Jesus tells us his church is one. Every once and while there is a symbolic event that reminds us what the truth should be. That’s what it was for all the people here today.”

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