



# The Happy Church – Special “Flood” Edition

## Flood Highlights

If you haven't heard yet, Eastern Kentucky has undergone massive flooding! John Jacobson, who normally writes these newsletters, is busy digging out his flooded home. Standing in for him, I'm Ned Denlinger from Centerville Grace, and have been down there three days helping out since the flood.

Aside from the Happy Church campuses, a five-county area received what they are describing as a once-in-1000-years rain, which produced massive flooding over the entire region. You've probably seen this on the news. In March of 2021, The Happy Church was flooded for the first time in its history, and they described that as a 100-year rain/flood. This current flood rose about 4 feet more than 2021. More structures, and levels of structures, received flooding that didn't last time. As you can imagine, recovering from this again after such a short period of time is discouraging, frustrating, and overwhelming for the team there, as well as their community.

Entire homes and vehicles have been washed away. Loss of life is still climbing. The scene is devastating and heart breaking. Having spent several days down there, along with teams from various partner churches, it can feel like a day's work is like “spitting in the ocean.” There is just so much to do and so many volunteers needed. First, we need to get the church campus through Phase 1 restoration (mucked out, walls opened, contents removed) before we even begin to help the community at large.



## Most Common Question

### Why don't you move to higher ground?

It is a great question and one that I field, especially from those who sacrificially gave 18 months ago to see them recover from the first flood.

- 1) First, topology is a challenge...Appalachia is rolling mountains/foothills. The only flat ground is along the rivers and streams, and obviously where the roads have been run as well. To build on higher ground, you'd have to excavate a flat spot in a mountain, and it's very rocky. There are no roads to access whatever you build. Only the wealthy can afford to build something on higher ground.
- 2) The Happy Church ministers to an impoverished culture. These folks live along the rivers and creeks. If the Happy Church could afford to build a campus on higher ground, they would no longer be amid the people they want to reach for Jesus.

As overwhelming and difficult as it is to dig out again, it's basically their only option. It's been encouraging over the last 4-5 days to see all the partner churches sending team members and all the hard work that's already being accomplished. But much to go...





# The Happy Church – Special “Flood” Edition

## The Clayhole Campus

The Clayhole church was built in 1937 and has never flooded. It took on water above the doors, almost to the ceiling inside. The parsonage next door was 1-2 feet above floor level. With a lack of manpower, the three buildings at Clayhole (church, gym, parsonage) haven't been touched. It's doubtful they can be recovered.

## How Can We Help?

- 1) **Financial donations:** Think of repairing 9 structures, along with the appliances, furniture, heating/cooling, sound systems, not to mention possessions, clothing, etc. The tab will surely be over \$100,000 (my estimate).

**Matching Funds:** Thanks to a generous donor with a huge heart for the Happy Church, he can provide matching funds up to \$15,000! If we can see \$15,000 donated in short order, these donations will be doubled! Simply go to: <https://thehappychurch.org/donate> for options on giving. If you have any financial questions, feel free to direct them to me: [Ned@CentervilleGrace.org](mailto:Ned@CentervilleGrace.org), as we manage all the finances for The Happy Church.

## 2) Volunteer teams:

There is an ongoing need for volunteers. We have a few buildings on the campus that haven't been touched yet. Mold is already becoming an issue. We must get those buildings mucked out and walls opened up. There's also plenty of electrical work (which I have been focused on), plumbing (installing new water heaters), and Heating/Cooling, if anyone has a knack for those.

**Something less strenuous?** Lots of cleaning could be done in all the buildings that are drying out. Wiping down walls, mopping floors, and general cleaning (restrooms, etc.). We plugged in some refrigerators/freezers that the electronics had dried out on, and they fired up. These need the mud cleaned out and food that is still good separated. Sorting clothing donations and arranging for pickup is a need. Cleaning shelves and re-stocking food supplies in pantries is also on the list of things to do. Needless to say, we can use anybody!

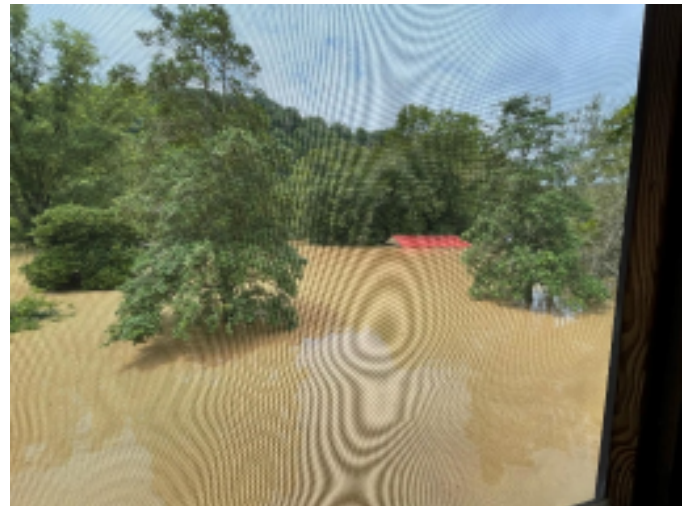
## 3) Pray for:

- a) The HC staff members and volunteers
- b) God's provision to rebuild
- c) Their community, as the Happy Church is already having an impact
- d) Families whose homes are gone and loved ones lost

## Who do we contact?

If you are considering volunteering or sending a team, call/text Vanessa Blinn at (765) 661-8987. Vanessa is Pastor Mike's daughter, and she is functioning as project manager. She can match your skills/desire with what needs done, as well as timing and potential lodging on-site.

If you have financial questions, as mentioned before, feel free to drop me an email.



Picnic Shelter roof

## How do we stay updated?

Right now, the best source of updates is The Happy Church Facebook page. Go to:

<https://facebook.com/thehappychurch>

For my pics/videos from the last few days:

<https://thehappychurch.org/pics>