

Faith, not funds, gets them through



Church sustained heavy damage during Hurricane Irene

The Rev. Dr. Lanie B. Price in the church sanctuary. DOUG HOOD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

By Terry Gauthier Muessig
Staff Writer

HAZLET — Faith, not funds, will get the members of the St. John's United Methodist Church through the devastation and destruction it sustained during Hurricane Irene.

Since Aug. 28, worship services have been conducted in the parish center, not the sanctuary. At present, there is no

carpeting or flooring of any kind in the sanctuary, and the silk screening on the back wall to the alter is torn and needs replacing, and a few of the legs of some of the pews have to be fixed.

"When I got to the church (at about 9 a.m.) that Sunday, the water in the parking lot was up to my knees," said Rev. Lanie Price. And, the water was about four-inches deep throughout the

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entire church building.

The sanctuary, like the rest of the rooms in the building were flooded with water.

"For some reason, they installed water-proof carpeting in here, (the gymnasium)," Price said.

The estimated damage to the church, its nursery school classrooms and building is upward of \$300,000, said Bill Bechtoldt of Hazlet, a member of the church.

Price said about seven weeks ago, a letter was sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agen-

cy (FEMA) requesting help financially with its losses. However, two days ago, Price received a letter back from the agency denying their request.

"That is bad news, really bad news, we were hoping for something, anything," Bechtoldt said, when he heard the church was denied funding.

Since August, all the carpeting in the building has been removed, and the mold and some of the walls have been repaired.

"We had to get the classrooms done first," Price said. The hurricane hit about a week before school started.

The carpeting for the hallways was \$40,000, she

said. Funds from the church and from the nursery school footed the cost. The church conducts a five-day a week nursery school program with seven classrooms for children ages 2½ to 5 years of age.

To complete the work in the 9,000 square-foot sanctuary, Bechtoldt said the cost could be upward of \$150,000.

"We can borrow the money from the church's endowment fund, but by church law the money has to be replaced," he said.

For more information, or to donate to the church, call 732-264-1236.