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## After Floods Ravage West Virginia, Church Serves As Hub of Relief

Por Dan Van Veen

📅 abril 13, 2025(https://julieroys.com/es/2025/04/13/) ⌚ 3:45 p. m. CDT

💬 Un (https://julieroys.com/es/west-virginia-flood-ravaged-local-church-serves-hub-food-  
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Amidst devastation, Family Worship Center in Jolo, West Virginia, rallied faith-based groups to provide relief to the rural area. (Photo: AG News)

McDowell County, West Virginia, already had more than its share of challenges prior to Feb. 15. Heavy snows had started to melt off the frozen Appalachian Mountains, but then, with what little soil covering the mountains saturated, a deep freeze returned, turning the melting snow into a thick sheet of ice connected to the thin — and now frozen — layer of top soil . . . and *then* a warm front rushed in and the rain began.



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What happens when water is poured onto a mountain of rock and clay covered with ice? Pastor Charlie Rose of Jolo Family Worship Center (<https://www.facebook.com/JoloFamilyWorshipCenter/>), located in southwest McDowell County — the southern-most part of the state — knows all too well.

“It was still sub-zero when that warm storm came in from the south and dumped seven or eight inches of rain on us,” he says. “The rain came pouring down, and these mountains, they’re so high and close together, the rain had nowhere to go but down these hillsides, melting the ice as it came . . . small streams became raging rivers rushing down these mountains.”

The rushing waters cascaded off the mountains and into the frozen valleys, where rain falling there already had no place to go, and together formed a torrent of churning, debris-laden waters racing downstream. Those whose homes that were in the path of the overflowing rivers were forced to seek shelter elsewhere and hope the waters wouldn’t submerge — or carry-off — their homes.

Tragically, five people from McDowell County lost their lives in the flooding (<https://julieroys.com/es/tag/flood/>), including a grandmother who was caring for her 2- and 13-year-old granddaughters and was trying to drive to safety.

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(Courtesy Photo)

“The car was surrounded in flood waters,” Rose says quietly. “A young man heroically waded and swam out and was able to pull the teenager to safety, but before he could go back for the others, the flood waters washed the car away . . .”

According to Rose, many of the residents in Jolo and in the mountains themselves, live in trailers and doublewides. He relates how in a trailer park of 20 homes, the home located on the highest ground had three feet of water inside of it. Since then, McDowell County has become one of four counties in West Virginia declared a major disaster area by the Trump administration.

“People now are trying to go in and save their homes,” Rose says. “But most of these homes’ floors are made out of that pressed sawdust . . . and in just a few months, those floors are literally going to fall apart — my guess is that FEMA is going to condemn them all . . . and these people have no place to go.”





## Small church, big impact

Rose, 71, was born in McDowell County. He has been leading the Jolo Family Worship Center congregation for the past 35 years, with relatively few people in the county not knowing about the church and its pastor.

“We average on Sunday mornings about 70 to 80 people, which may not seem like many to most people, but we are one of the largest churches in the county,” Rose says. “McDowell County used to have around 100,000, most working the coal mines. Today, there are fewer than 18,000 people — and around 3,000 of those are incarcerated in the federal penitentiary.”

Despite the congregation being of modest size, Rose says the church is filled with compassionate, caring people who aren’t afraid to get their hands dirty or volunteer their time to touch lives.

Rose says that due to the Dry Fork River flooding, much of the area’s infrastructure has been damaged, with many roads closed and water lines destroyed.

“I called [Convoy of Hope](https://convoyofhope.org/) (<https://convoyofhope.org/>) and [Appalachian Ministry] Network (<https://www.appag.net/>). Superintendent Dave Dillon did also,” Rose says. “I tell you, my friend, they were here within two days, set up in our parking lot!”



(Courtesy Photo)

Rose says that it was amazing that the Convoy drivers arrived so quickly or even at all, as they had to take a roundabout route to reach Jolo due to the road closures.

With the arrival of Convoy of Hope, volunteers from the church — and even a few people from outside the church — pitched in to help load cars with food, water, cleaning items, clothing from the church’s clothing bank, and any other relief supplies people needed.

And then after another phone call by a church member who used to work with Christ in Action, [Christ in Action](https://www.christinaction.com/content/Home.aspx) (<https://www.christinaction.com/content/Home.aspx>) arrived with a highly underrated blessing — a 12-shower shower trailer with a 6,000-gallon hot water tank. *Thankful* wouldn’t begin to describe people’s responses.

“We were three weeks without running water,” Rose says. “It also turned extremely cold right after the flooding; we got six inches of ice and snow. We took food into the hollers and to people who couldn’t get out, and hand-carried propane bottles to people, including into the mountains, going as far as a four-wheeler could go and then walking them the rest of the way around the mountainside to those who needed it.”

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## History of hope

Rose explains that due to the lack of industry, McDowell County not only deals with a depressed economy, but many people bear heavy emotional loads as well, resulting in statistics that are heartbreaking.

“It has been reported that we are among the top in the country for high school dropouts, suicides, teen pregnancies, and drug abuse and we have among the lowest of life expectancy rates,” Rose says. “We also have a record number of grandparents raising their grandchildren.”

Rose can share story after story of conducting funerals for those who lost their lives due to drugs and suicide, but that darkness only drives him and the members of Family Worship Center to be an ever-increasing light to their community and county.

The church is uniquely, yet intentionally, constructed. There’s a gym/sanctuary that makes up just over half the church, with the other portion being a two-story dormitory designed to house teams of workers (or those in need of short-term emergency housing). Every year, Rose schedules work teams to come in to bless the community through their Hope for McDowell ministry.



(Courtesy Photo)

“Over the years, we’ve put on probably 100 new roofs, built 15 houses for low-income families, and made all kinds of house repairs, including building at least 150 wheelchair ramps,” Rose says. “And through our clothing and food bank, we are feeding 40 widows each month.”

Network Superintendent Dillon has nothing but high praise for Rose and the Family Worship Center congregation.

“Pastor Charlie and the congregation of Jolo Family Worship Center have been doing and are doing incredible work to bless the McDowell County area of southern West Virginia,” he states. “Charlie is an amazing man for sure, and an incredible pastor, not only to the church he serves and leads, but also to his community and the surrounding area.”

As impressive as the proactive, meet-the-need outreach the church is involved in, perhaps what’s most amazing is the church’s widows’ housing ministry.

“We’ve built five cottages on our church property for low-income widows — many of them surviving on less than \$1,000 a month — who live in the homes rent-free,” Rose says. “All we ask is that they pay the utilities. We’re currently working on our sixth home and have teams lined up to finish it up this summer.”



Rose explains that as a widow passes, relatives take any personal belongings, then the church cleans and touches up the cottage for another widow to enjoy.

... and all this from a church that averages fewer than 90 people on Sundays!

## Planting seeds of faith

It's not hard to imagine the kind of reputation Rose and Family Worship Center have built with community and county leaders and citizens. As the church is known as a place of hope and help, Rose says that God didn't cause the flooding, but He is using it for His glory.

"I have gotten the opportunity to pray with people that I never would have had the chance to pray with before," Rose says. "I've been here 35 years, I've done so many funerals, and so many people have never let me pray with them ... but now, I've had at least three people saved in our parking lot!"

Rose tells of one instance a few weeks ago where a man, who had recently gotten out of prison for committing murder, came to the distribution.

"He was standing there in the parking lot, tears streaming from his eyes, and I told him, 'I think I need to pray for you.' All he said was, 'OK, preacher.' So, I began to pray, and he was saved right there!"

Opportunities to pray for previously hardened individuals repeated over and over, with Rose noting that even this past Sunday, three new people were in attendance for Sunday service.

And with everything going on, Rose admits sometimes it's hard to keep things straight, but by delegating responsibilities and leaning heavily upon the help of his wife, Sharon, and the church secretary, Wendy Adams, the church's many ministries touch more lives than he ever imagined.

"I was talking to a guy in the parking lot, he had lost nearly everything, but now él wanted to talk about God," Rose says. "I told him, 'You know, sometimes the Lord allows the bottom of the boat to get kicked out so we will turn to him.' And he said, 'I do believe the bottom of my boat has done been kicked out.' Then we prayed."



(Courtesy Photo)

Although it would seem Rose and Family Worship Center members have already gone beyond the call of duty, they are already working to raise funds for what many families will need as soon as their homes are deemed safe.

"Families are going to need things like stoves, refrigerators, washers, dryers — all the appliances ruined by the flooding," Rose explains. "Of course, building materials — everything from insulation to plywood — are also needed, but it isn't easy to bring it in here without a tractor trailer."

And recently Rose received a call from a couple from Kentucky, which shares a boundary line with West Virginia, that has a used appliance store. Learning of what Rose and the church was working to accomplish, they offered to sell them all the appliances they needed for \$100 a piece — a fraction of what new units (and many used appliances) are sold for.

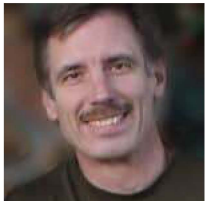
"We already have several teams lined up to come in to help with clean-up, rebuilding, and repairs, but we can always use more," Rose says. "We can house teams of up to 32 comfortably in the Life Center. We've also established a flood relief fund to help with the purchase of appliances and other needed materials."

The list of ways that Rose and Family Worship Center are involved in aiding its community and the impact they are making for Christ on lives could go on and on, for as Rose so aptly puts it, "If you have the time, I have the stories."

Yet it's Dillon who gives perhaps the greatest insight into this remote, but powerful ministry, stating that, "Charlie's heart for the people of this impoverished and recently flood-ravaged portion of our network is immeasurable, as demonstrated by his and the members of Family Worship Center's non-stop efforts to help those in need by tangible expressions of the love of Jesus Christ. He is truly a Matthew 25 (<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew%2025%3A31-40&version=NIV>) pastor!"

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*(<https://news.ag.org/en/articles/news/2025/04/ag%20church%20gives%20hope%20to%20flood-ravaged%20west%20virginians>).*



*Dan Van Veen, based in Springfield, Missouri, is news editor of AG News.*

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