

“God suffers with us”

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ELCA Disaster Response has a well-deserved reputation for “being in it for the long haul.” Your gifts and prayers are still needed to help our neighbors in China recover after the devastating 2008 earthquake. Thank you.

The Rev. Gu Yu-mei has served Mianzhu Christian Church in China for 11 years. In 2007, she left to start graduate study at Nanjing Seminary.

Then the Sichuan earthquake hit on May 12, 2008, rocking the region with a magnitude 7.9 strength. More than 70,000 people were killed with another 18,000 missing and five million made homeless.

For Pastor Gu, there was no question. She had to return and stay to help with relief efforts. Mianzhu was on the edge of the most heavily affected areas from the earthquake. The church itself, renovated to its 1920s beauty just a year prior, was heavily damaged. The neighboring town of Hanwang, where there are some preaching points from the Mianzhu Church, was hit harder. More than 4,000 were killed there.

Volunteer relief teams were immediately dispatched from the congregation



Franklin Ishida

CHINA

into the community. “Much work needed to be done in the city for the earthquake survivors,” said Pr. Gu. “We have been doing all we can for them. This congregation is helping the community,” where thousands are living in temporary shelter set up by the government. Pr. Gu lives on a bunk bed under a tarpaulin in the church yard.

Mianzhu Church, which worshiped 200 between all its preaching points before the earthquake, now has more than 800 in attendance. “The earthquake could destroy homes and church buildings, but it cannot destroy the faith,” said Pr. Gu. “We know that God suffers with us. But as the Chinese saying goes, ‘at the end of bitterness is sweetness.’ We all have joy and peace in our hearts.”



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