

Sanctuary of another kind

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remain open as a shelter for as long as the need persists.

"They're just fantastic," said Vaisey, a Tennessee volunteer who's been with the Red Cross for 12 years. "I've never seen anything like this," he said of the congregation's response.

Little things help, like showers, courtesy of the Childersburg Fire Dept., who brought a HAZMAT unit to the church so people could bathe. There's also been a trip to the movies for the kids.

Martha George, who said she lives in the neighborhood, stopped by because she wanted to do something. She ended up cleaning bathrooms.

"They said that's what they needed," she said.

Evacuees cope differently with the circumstances.

Clarissa Bradford Bettis said she and her family were among the first people at the shelter. Their Mobile home was flooded, she said, and FEMA has told her not to go back.

For now, she's waiting for phone calls to be returned.

Harold Wright Jr. of Grand Bay said he tries to "hold it together."

His family has been at Our Savior since it opened as a shelter. FEMA, he said, has asked his family not to return to their storm-damaged home.

"I smile through it because I'm alive. My family's alive," he said. "I keep looking forward."

Wright said he's attended church since he was a child, and that even now, he believes God is on his side.

He said he prays for security, the health of his family and

"just to know that I can make it a day at a time."

Wendy Storer, clad in pink, Eeyore-emblazoned pajamas, said she's working on getting through hour by hour.

A tornado hit her Irvington home, she said.

"My kids don't have nothing left," said the 26-year-old. "It's hard for them because they're not used to doing without."

Even so, her 5-year-old daughter, Zana, spent part of a recent morning sharing pink petals of soap with those she encountered in the shelter. Seven-year-old Jewel wanted to help organize items for other evacuees.

At Our Savior, evacuees like Jewel pitch in to help right alongside volunteers from the church and community.

They're not just helping out at Our Savior.

Earlier this week, Vaisey said, those living at the shelter joined with volunteers to take extra items from Our Savior to a Saraland shelter that needed supplies.

"Our biggest helpers are the local folks," said Shirley Duck, who said she's one of the "kitchen ladies" at the church. Members of the church, along with local businesses, have provided meals for those at the shelter.

"These people are in desperate need of help," she said. "It's just our Christian duty," she said.

Hanson's wife, Pamela, said you have to treat people as you'd want to be treated.

"It could be you," she said. "It could be me."

"All you can do is put your arms around these people."

If you want to help

■ Bayou La Batre First United Methodist Church, 12700 Padgett Switch Road, is in particular need of volunteer help from men and young boys able to perform physical tasks.

■ West Mobile Baptist Church, 7501 Airport Blvd., is a collection site for disaster relief. The church is collecting nonperishable foods, baby items, hygiene items, cleaning supplies and clean clothes that are labeled with sizes. For information, call the church at 639-9952.

■ Harvest Church, 1275 E. 1-65 Service Road, is accepting financial donations for hurricane victims, as well as collecting water, clothing, nonperishable foods, diapers, infant items, household furniture, small appliances and hygiene items.

■ St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 4051 Old Shell Road, is receiving donations in the parish hall from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays. Items most needed include diapers, baby food, formula, wipes, first aid items, canned food, Gatorade, can openers, cookies, crackers, peanut butter and jelly, granola bars and clothing.

■ The Archdiocese of Mobile is collecting new pillows, undergarments, diapers and towels at 400 Government St., 555 Dauphin St. or any Catholic Social Services office. Financial donations may be directed to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Mobile, designated for Hurricane Katrina and mailed to P.O. Box 230, Mobile, AL 36601.

■ Congregation Ahavas Chesed is collecting nonperishable food, clothing, water and toiletries from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays at 705

National groups help

By Associated Press
Religion News Service

Among the religious organizations collecting donations and assisting in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts are:

■ Adventist Development and Relief Agency: (800) 424-2372 or www.adra.org

■ Catholic Charities USA: (800) 919-9338 or www.catholiccharities-usa.org

■ Christian Reformed World Relief Committee: (800) 552-7972 or