

Congregation Donates More Than \$200,000 to Tornado-Damaged Church

A church destroyed by a tornado just two months ago unexpectedly received enough money to rebuild their facility.



[] Last Sunday a church destroyed by a tornado just two months ago unexpectedly received enough money from a neighboring congregation to rebuild their facility.

Thirty members of Fernvale Community Church in Fairview, Tenn., were meeting in a temporary sanctuary when 400 members of Grace Center in Franklin, Tenn., walked into the service and presented the congregation with a \$203,408 offering collected that morning.

Grace Center members knew only that the funds would be given to a person or group in need.

"It's hard to believe people would do so much for others. It makes me cry just thinking about it," member Thomas Taylor told *Charisma*. The 77-year-old said he had been "devastated" when he saw that the small church his grandfather helped build in 1885 had been ripped apart by a tornado on Feb. 5. "It looked like a war zone," he said. "It worried me whether we'd be able to build it back."

Church officials believe the donated money will allow the church to rebuild according to new construction codes.

"Settling the fact that we can build the church has made me realize how powerful God is," said Ann Lee, board secretary of the non-denominational Fernvale church.

Before presenting the check, Grace Center senior pastor Jeff Dollar told the teary-eyed Fernvale group: "We are with you."

We have a message for you –God has not forgotten you.” The two groups then took communion together.

Plans are under way for both congregations to join together in the groundbreaking ceremony of the new building. “It was the purest act of giving I have ever witnessed,” said Chris Dupré, assistant pastor of Grace Center. – **Renee DeLoriea in Franklin, Tenn.**