

# Advent Program at Trinity Center:

Trinity Center will offer a new program at the Pelican House. On the weekend of December 2-4 the Pelican House will host an advent retreat.

We spend a lot of time and waiting – for Christmas, for test results, for a baby to be born, for the imminent death of someone we love, for something to happen on the other side of something that’s already happened, for who-knows-what... This Advent retreat will feature reminders on waiting from many of our spiritual ancestors including Brother Lawrence, Henri Nouwen, Gerald May, Thomas Merton, Julian of Norwich, Job, John of the Cross, Edward Hays, Mary Oliver, Teresa of Avila and others.

The leader of this retreat is Lisa Richey. She is a laywoman and spiritual director from Lake Waccamaw and is a member of the Grace Episcopal/Christ the King Lutheran congregation in Whiteville. She is an oblate in the Order of Julian of Norwich and a charter member of the Shalem Society for Contemplative Leadership. Lisa is part of the Trinity Center family and has lead many retreats. Her knowledge of the Pelican House, as well as her warmth and guidance, helps create a wonderful community within the spiritual center of Trinity Center.

The total cost for the retreat is \$278, which includes your housing in a private room at the Pelican House, meals, programming and all materials. Retreatants will gather at 5pm on Friday and bid farewell at lunch on Sunday. To register, or for more information contact program registrar Stephanie Rudolph at [srudolph@trinityctr.com](mailto:srudolph@trinityctr.com) or call her at Trinity Center toll free at 888-874-6287.



### Trinity Center's Vision Statement:

*"Trinity Center welcomes all people to the spiritual home of Episcopalians of East Carolina, where we share God's gifts of community and hospitality in a natural coastal environment."*

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## Orphans of the Storm:

Liz, Millar, Sound to Sea Instructor

As Sound to Sea staff returned to their Trinity Center homes in the wake of September’s Hurricane Irene, they found themselves alongside other Trinity Center staff surveying the damage, clearing debris and being thankful for the blessing of what was not lost. While picking through piles branches and fragments of the former teaching dock, they also stumbled upon some smaller storm survivors. The surrounding salt marsh teemed with life as reptiles and other critters seemed to sense it safe to nose out of their hurricane hiding spots.

Among the refugees were several turtles, including a mud turtle and a painted turtle. A diamondback terrapin was rescued swimming down Beaufort’s Front Street in the eye of Irene; little “Irene” now resides beneath the glow of a radiant basking light in Sound to Sea’s cushy Pond Classroom. A couple of glass lizards, which look more like snakes due to their lack of legs, were also seen slithering around the property – one in particular which had lost its tail not in one piece, but in two. A marsh rabbit that was recovered while treading water in the conference pool spent a few hours hanging out and warming up with the Sound to Sea staff.

Subsequently, Sound to Sea students have been finding abundant amounts of life in the pond, the forest, and the sound, especially in the form of mosquito hatchlings around property! The overwhelming amount of wildlife has been a reassuring sign of the resilience of our natural surroundings.



Diamondback Terrapin “Irene” finds a sunny spot to bask.



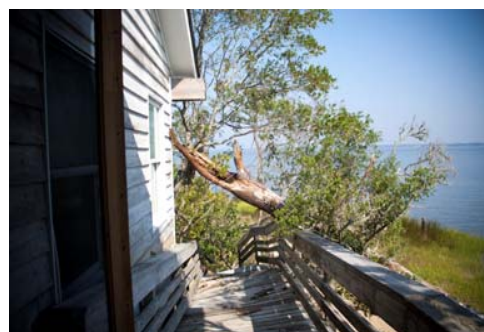
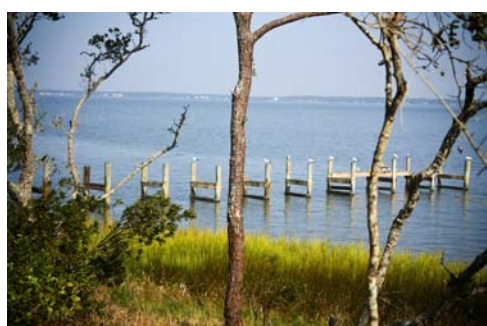
A lucky marsh rabbit drying off after being rescued



Finally back in his natural habitat!

# Hurricane Irene: Trinity Center feels effects with moderate damage

-Photographs taken by Heather Perry



## Road Scholar Dates for 2012:

### Using Digital Photography to Capture North Carolina's Dynamic Coast

January 29-February 1, 2012  
 Or  
 February 12-17, 2012  
 Or  
 February 26-29, 2012

### Birding on the Outer Banks: Coastal Forests and Island Sanctuaries

March 18-21, 2012

### Trying to Reason with Hurricane Season, From the Estuary to the Ocean & Gentle on My Mind

April 1-6, 2012

### Intergenerational: Exploring the Waters and the Wild of the Outer Banks

June 5-8, 2012



**I would like to make a donation to Trinity Center.  
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- Scholarship Fund (camp and programs)
- Employee Fund (in lieu of tips)

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**Thank you for your gift!**

# My Thoughts:

-Penn Perry, Executive Director



**I**t's funny to try to think about the summer of 2011. I know that it was mostly a good summer. I know that Summer Sound-to-Sea Day Camp had record numbers, and I know that Camp Trinity had another stellar summer. I know that we took many groups onto this relatively small piece of property, and I know that most of our guests were very satisfied with our service. If you ask me to talk about the specifics of summer 2011, however, I find myself really only able to think of the specifics of the events surrounding the arrival of Hurricane Irene.

Hurricane Irene came ashore as a category one storm. As I have said to you before, friend of Trinity Center, I have had the pleasure of living at Trinity Center for twenty-three summers, and I have lived here year-round since 2001. During that time I have experienced no less than seven hurricanes. To my mind, Irene most resembles Ophelia. Both came ashore here as category one storms, and both did almost all of their damage with a sound side storm surge. Both storms also made clear that the number of the storm sometimes matters less than where the storm goes and how long it stays over any one area.

By the time Hurricane Irene made landfall, we had long ago battened down the hatches here at Trinity Center, and all guests and staff were gone. Our own hurricane protocols are well-established at this point, and our staff went through those protocols straightforwardly. Because of the mandatory evacuation of the island, my wife and I also left property. Like all of eastern North Carolina, we settled in to wait out the storm. For awhile we thought our area might be spared any major damage, but as that Saturday wore on and the winds did not die down, I became more and more concerned about Trinity Center.

Thanks to a special pass, we were able to get back onto the island early Saturday night, just as the winds were finally easing. It was too dark to assess property, especially since there was no power and there were no lights. Sunday morning Heather and I trekked across Trinity Center, taking pictures and surveying the damage. You will no doubt see some of her photos in this very issue of Soundings. Shingles down, the roads blanketed by green and brown leaves, branches, and pine needles, debris everywhere – that's what we saw all around. Down by the sound, however, the strength of Irene was really evident. Dorm D had been undercut by the storm surge, uncovering even more of the pilings that hold it up into the air. Our camp dock was gone past land, and several of our sailboat racks were destroyed and unceremoniously dumped into the boat basin. Sanders Point had been underwater for several hours, and its borders had been seriously eroded. Our Marsh Walk lost its teaching dock, which was floating flush against the shore. Massive trees were down, causing Heather and I to crawl and climb at different points.

Regardless, even as I was disheartened by the amount of damage I saw, I knew that we might have experienced far worse. Our buildings seemed intact, and we had experienced no major water damage that I could see. We had a generator running to keep the food in the freezers cold, and the beach side of our property had done fine. I knew it could have been worse, and in the days that followed, I heard stories of just how much worse it could have been.

Even as the week following the hurricane was a real test to my endurance and the endurance of many members of my staff, it was also a testament to our resilience as a group and as a business. Most Trinity Center employees came to work that week ready to do whatever was necessary to get our doors open so we could offer hospitality to our guests once more. Staffers raked, chopped, picked up, swept, and did whatever else they could to whip us back into shape. First the power came up, then the phone system, then finally the internet. We took a small school onto property the Wednesday following the hurricane, and by that weekend, Labor Day weekend as it turned out, we were open for a full weekend. We might have been a bit battered and bruised around the edges, but we were open.

Like many people and small businesses in eastern North Carolina, we are still dealing with the aftermath of the hurricane. At this point, that means many visits from various insurance claims adjusters. We still do not know how much of the damage will be covered by insurance. We will just move forward making the repairs that we must in order to keep doing business while we wait for the proverbial check in the mail. I believe we will do fine; then again, I always believe that Trinity Center will do fine because so many people care about this center and its many ministries.

I could feel the prayer cover over the center in the many texts, phone calls, emails, and Facebook messages we received before, during, and after the storm. I am so grateful for the offers of support and assistance that we have received here. It helped me during the immediate aftermath of the storm to know that so many people were concerned about how the center fared.

I do believe that this type of weather event is one to be anticipated. We must be prepared to survive such storms because we are in a prime position to be visited by them periodically. Part of surviving such storms is having a healthy capital reserve fund to cover the inevitable business losses that will occur. One day, when this center is fully endowed at whatever capacity, I believe our own capital reserve fund will be healthy enough that we will be able to spend our time cleaning, repairing, and rebuilding without worrying about how we will cover those losses. I look forward to that day.