



CUMC Serve VIM South Carolina Trip June 26-July 2 2017 Team Journal

Monday, June 26, 2017 - Bill Yufer

Long ride in the van and my skinny butt hurt. Got to know more about some of the group. Overall had a good time. Learned about how little help they received from the government. At best they get about 100 homes a year done. I have no cell service!!! Van did not stink from the youth trip. Heather was told to wear her seat belt correctly because I was concerned for her safety. I was looking forward to learning about the work we were going to be doing.

Monday, June 26, 2017 - Mira Hewlett

We left CUMC early this morning as a crew of 8, picking up Frank along the way and meeting three who were at the beach on site. The ride down was uneventful (always good) and very minimal traffic (even better). Once we hit North Carolina we started more country roads and South Carolina even smaller roads.

We are staying this week at Trinity UMC in Andrews, SC. It's a small downtown but the church is beautiful and a great place to stay. We met Ward, the SC disaster recovery coordinator and learned a bit about the work. The UMC is working in 24 counties that were hit by floods of 2015 and then Hurricane Matthew of 2016. About 1/3 of those who applied for FEMA got help and of those many needed help beyond that.

After dinner downtown we returned for devotions and announcements before bed. Everyone shared why they are here – some because they are hooked on mission trips, some it's their first time and this trip God pointed out (church bulletin or another person) and others because they want their kids to see them helping those in need. We are a diverse group in age and experience but all look forward to serving this week together.

Monday, June 26, 2017 - Roger Woods

During the last week, I've been hearing in my head the lyrics of "They will know we are Christians by our Love". Then Pastor Jim cited the verse from which the song was inspired, John 13:35, the day before we left. That is the theme for me this week and I continue to be amazed by the love of the people in the congregation at CUMC and the spirit of those on the mission trip.

The heat and humidity is intimidating and dangerous but Pastor Mira is a great task master making sure we stay hydrated. It's always good for us to be reminded how blessed we are for even the smallest things. Its

hard work but we don't mind. There is a real desire on our part to do more than was planned for us to do and we will do as much as they will let us.

The trip down was long but fun as I got to know Heather a lot better as well as a few others on our team. It was hard to hear that folks in the community are still seeking assistance so long after the storms, so I hope the church considers coming back next year.

On a humorous note, my northern teammates are enjoying some of the great things about the south. Last night someone wanted to know about "that noise". I didn't even notice the sound of cicadas until they asked. After the first day, I'm exhausted but looking forward to a good night's sleep and getting started again tomorrow!

Monday, June 26, 2017- April Butler

Today was uneventful. Since we (Sam and I) were close by Andrews, we had the opportunity to relax a little bit today before driving to Andrews. We picked Randy up and drove 1.5 hours to Andrews. We grabbed groceries at the Piggly Wiggly. Noticed that there were not as many options food wise, especially with the fresh vegetables. The town I believe was about what I expected. It was a great start to getting to know some of the team members better. I am excited to start working tomorrow, but a little anxious about getting on the roof.

Monday, June 26, 2017- Randy Noaker

First mission trip, although I had planned to go many times before. Like April & Sam, Janet & I were "in the area". They picked me up, and via the 1 ½ hour ride to Andrews, I got to know them better. After stopping for groceries, we arrived at Trinity UMC just minutes before the rest of the team from CUMC pulled in. After unloading food & luggage and getting a briefing from Ward Smith, we walked to dinner at Antonio's. Great conversations and camaraderie. When we returned, we separated the tools into appropriate teams. Then it was time for devotions and reflections. It was great to learn what brought each of us "to the party". Most of us were in bed before 11:00, but none of us males got much sleep, as our room temperatures felt like they were in the low 50's!! (This entry is actually being written Tuesday morning (7/27), and we are now ready to "Rock & Roll", heading to our respective work sites.)

Tuesday, June 27, 2017 - Megan Long

I was slightly worried about doing roofing work just because I haven't done any roofing work before. I'm definitely glad Rich and Brad showed us what needs done. Frank pulled April and me back up to the roof to do the felting. We crawled back and forth across the backside of Queen's (the homeowner) roof. I was very proud of both of us and of Rich, Brad, and Frank with being so patient with us.

We've had a group of college kids and their youth leader to work with too. April and I helped the youth leader (Brittany) cut pieces of plywood to patch the roof before putting the shingles on. Got to use a circular saw – FUN, FUN!

I've really enjoyed pushing my comfort "pocket" by doing a fair bit on the roof and talking to new people – new people I didn't know in my group, the group as a whole and talking to Queen. We learned that she has 7 kids! God bless her! Can't wait to get back to roof work and more to learn tomorrow.

Also, I really enjoyed joining together, all of us with Queen, while Rich led us in prayer at the end of the day. It was just a really good end to the day, standing in Queen's front yard, knowing work had been started well.

Here's to bed and a good day at work tomorrow!

Tuesday, June 27, 2017-Sam Butler

This morning, after a very cold night for the guys, went smoothly. Both teams went off to their respective sites as scheduled. Team Mira arrived unexpectedly at Sandy's house, but after waking Sandy, things got going quickly. Randy, Bill, Heather and Sam started demo on the bathroom ceiling only to find a roofing issue that Randy and Bill addressed in short order. Roger, Mira and Heather took care of replacing the skirting around the base. Roger hung a door. Sam, Mira and Roger hung the facing. It looked like a storm was rolling in, so the team packed up. A quick stop at Dollar General, for a much requested toaster, and a hardware store was made before returning to Trinity UMC.

Today I felt a bit different about this trip. My first experience on a mission trip was in Haiti, and my time here in Andrews is totally different. Today we stopped at Dollar General. While we're not home, but the comforts of home aren't that far away.

Tuesday, June 27, 2017-Brad Weiser

Mission trips are interesting in that it isn't just about the mission or the people we meet or the people you are traveling with or the work that you will be completing. It's more about how all these things intertwine and how they shift your priorities and perspective on a daily and global basis. And that is where the cool stuff happens: because the experience is completely organic and different for everyone. Each night we gather around for devotions, and everyone gets to share how their individual perspective was shaped by the events and experiences of that particular day.

My personal takeaways from today (assisted by the perspective of others):

- We watched and helped people do things they had never done before today. Didn't expect that.
- Even on a common mission and a common team everyone is motivated by something different.
- Fears overcome out of desire to help/support are visible on the face of the overcomer. Didn't expect that either.
- Attaching to the people and perhaps not the mission may have the greater net impact for all parties.
- We should always be willing to be 'perspective-open'. Seems like fertile soil for growth.

Wednesday, June 28, 2017 - Frank Williams

Back at Queen's home today continuing the roofing job. Got started quickly today as everyone learned the jobs from the day before. It always amazes me how people just pitch in. You really don't have to assign them. Even on the first day, the jobs were described, some people went to this area, some people went to that area and before you know it everyone is working.

Yesterday the weather was brutal, very humid and little if any breeze. Today was much better, not quite as humid and off and on a decent breeze.

The people are so thankful for the work we are doing. We lost the water to Queen's home for a while today, right around "bathroom break" time, so we went across the street to the Municipal building to see if we could use their facilities. When told them what we were doing (working to repair Queen's house), they couldn't thank us enough.

Wednesday, June 28, 2017 - Kyle Kneeland

I can summarize today and yesterday, too by a three word phrase: service in action. It was a great day today. I was really pushed to my limits, yet it felt amazing to reach higher, go steps further beyond the comfortable. I felt like our group really jelled today and it's great to have the camaraderie that has developed in our group.

Each of us uplifted the other, whether it was a trip to fill water, a check if everyone was okay or a substitution for their duties.

Today, I was pushed beyond my limits. In that moment, however, it was great watching God fill my emptiness when I couldn't go on myself physically. Much like fasting, I watched my body, soul, and mind be uplifted by God when He saw my limits had been reached. Through faith, I pushed on and God gave me a refound reservoir of energy. In 2015, I was diagnosed with stage III cancer. For the majority of that year, I was very sick. This is my first major exercise/hard labor since 2015, so I was concerned about my stamina. Yet, God met me in my need and helped me along.

Enough about me though. I came on this trip to help others. Today, seeing more than half the roof today reminded me how much we had done for Queen. You could tell she appreciated the work. As a CNA, she has limited income. In addition, she has many of her family living with her. Yet, she was the one making sure we were doing well by checking in. It was a great showing of how happy she was with so little. She even waited until 4:00 p.m. to witness the end of our workday before going to bed (she works at night). Knowing how much of an impact we had on her and her family also kept me going and was a reminder for me in my lowest moments.

When the group went to the Lane, SC municipality building to use the bathroom, the secretary and the sheriff even thanked us for the service to the community. Nearly every vehicle that passed by waved/beeped which also shows how appreciative the community was. Every little thing we did, from picking up pieces of old tar paper to driving in shingling nails, impacted so many. It truly has been a humbling experience thus far.

Wednesday, June 28, 2017-Rich Charette

For me mission trips are an emotional and physical drain. But, they are also a spiritual "filling of my tank" and a reminder of what we have been called to do. Emotionally, I feel we are making a minimal impact...there is so much that needs to be done. We are part of a recovery effort, but there is so much need. No doubt not all the result of a storm. Physically, the work is hard...re-shingling a roof in the Carolina sun certainly takes its toll. Spiritually it is humbling to see what people are willing to do and endure for someone they don't know. Our work is not perfect, but what we are doing is perfect. Our homeowner is so thankful—and gives thanks to God for the blessing. I'm thankful for this opportunity to serve beside people from CUMC and John's Creek UMC as we serve the people of South Carolina.

Wednesday, June 28, 2017-Heather Weiser

"Here I Am Lord," send me. Tonight during devotions we discussed songs/versus/quotes that are meaningful to us—this song is mine. Why have I always had emotional response to this song? Why do I begin weeping when the chords begin? Because our answer should always be "me, send me." Whenever God wants us to go, we should say, "Okay, let's go!" On this trip we all said "Ok", and I'm so glad I did. It's never short of a miracle that these teams get along so well with differing personalities and opinions. But, as usual, the team is thriving, being productive and beginning to release their reserve to grow deeper as a group.

I am never disappointed when I let go of my agenda/plans/mislaid priorities to follow God's lead. I need to remember that and keep it as a compass for the course I stay on in this human life.

Thursday, June 29, 2017- Heather Weiser

Today ½ of our team finished our first project (trim and matching ceiling texture). The other ½ started a new project in Kingstree- diagnosing a mold problem & correction, including tearing down old dry wall, putting up new, pulling out millions of staples/nails and killing lots of mold spores. Along the way we met a few kids and lots of puppies!!

The parents were working while we were there, but their 12 year old daughter was more than helpful. Around lunch time the other ½ came to help out, while Marvin & Clara visited a few times with supplies. I'm not sure I learned anything jaw-dropping today, but I did learn how invasive and pervasive mold can be if left untreated. I'm hoping spores didn't enter my respiratory tract!

I've noticed some slowing down today- probably just less sleep in general and less down time than a typical day. But our team is focused and still working hard on completing projects to the best of our ability. Our sarcastic group is a bunch of gold-hearted do-ers! I'm glad to be part of this small effort to do a lot of good for some great people in South Carolina.

Thursday, June 29, 2017- Frank Williams

A milestone at Queen's house today. All new shingles now cover the entire roof. Tomorrow, we'll install ridge vents. That will pretty much complete that job. Some other miscellaneous jobs we'll work on include replacing a porch light fixture and some skirting around the base of her trailer.

People here continue to show their kindness. The mail lady comes by each day about the time we're eating lunch, always speaking to us and asking "what's for lunch?" Our answer is "PB&J," to which she responds, "sounds good." So today we had a PB&J sandwich ready for her. But the amazing part was she had a case of water for us. As it turns out, we would have run out of water later that afternoon if she hadn't brought that water to us. God doth provide.

Thursday, June 29, 2017 - Kyle Kneeland

It was amazing to see the transformation of the roof in the last three days come to an apex today. We were able to cover the sides of the roof with shingles up until the final strip at the top, which is where the ridge cap will be placed to finish off the project. We really are seeing the fruits of our labor come to life before us. It's been hot and humid out. I have sunburns on my face and arms. I smell a lot. However, those little, petty, annoying things pale in comparison to the awesome empowering ways God is using the ministry and the work here to reach others. The smiling faces of the little children belong to Queen's children; Queen's contagious laughter and compassion; the drivers driving by honking, the Lane Municipality Office staff's gratitude; even the mail lady having a 24-case of water. Watching the community respond to the mission's work—now THAT is what makes this worthwhile.

Thursday, June 29, 2017- Rich Charette

Another hot day in the Carolina sun... an occasional breeze was a blessing. Our teams, Carlisle UMC and John's Creek UMC (from Georgia) made an outstanding effort and completed the shingling... minus the ridge cap and vents. It was inspiring to see the team work... no young and old just "team" ... no CUMC and John's Creek just Christians working together to help someone in need. And, I can't forget Ray... a 73 year old volunteer with SC UMC disaster relief who carried bundles of shingles to the roof and kept the job site clean. And also, Nicholas... a college student doing an internship with SC UMC disaster relief. Each one of us answering God's call to serve. I am again humbled by their willingness to travel far, work in difficult conditions for a stranger and make an impact in our world in the name of Jesus.

Friday, June 30, 2017- Randy Noaker

Started today where ended yesterday, hoping to have all of the drywall hung & mudded and ready for paint & trim re-installation. But as the saying goes, most things take at least twice as long as you think they should. The good news is that our team focused on completing the job- accomplishing what we intended- rather than the targeted quitting time. Everyone pulled together and we achieved our objective with only a little over an hour of voluntary overtime. I love the tireless dedication of this team.

Today was our first rainy day. I think we had 4 or 5 separate storms pass through beginning about 11:00 AM. It would POUR for maybe a half hour, and then the cycle just kept repeating. Fortunately our team's work was inside work, and if we had to cut outside, there was a covered porch where we could stay reasonably dry. The first storm, however, caught us by surprise, and many of our tool bins took on an inch or more of water. But we were still able to keep working, where our other team- putting on a new roof- were forced to quit by early afternoon.

I'm leaving earlier tomorrow than the rest of the crew, and while I'll be working a "half shift" in the morning, this will be last night of team camaraderie.

It has definitely been my pleasure to get to know the team members that attend the 9:45 or 11:00 AM Sunday services, as attending the 8:15 AM service, it is through this trip that I was able to meet and share with more than half of the team members. It has been a great experience for me, and those folks that we have helped are very appreciative of our service in Christ's name. This will NOT be my last mission trip! God's blessings to everyone!

Friday, June 30, 2017-Megan Long

I had a line from a Beatle's song going through my mind this morning while I was up on the roof with Frank and Rich. "I get by with a little help from my friends." At first I didn't quite think it fit our groups as a whole because we don't know Queen, the group from St. John's Creek, Nick, or Marvin & Clara very well. Honestly, I don't know some of my team mates all that well. But as I started thinking, I thought about how we call ourselves Brothers & Sisters in Christ and how we have become friends over the past four days. It's so true as well that we all get by with help from our friends—this week we've gotten help from Marvin, Nick, or each other. And now Queen's roof is all but done! We just need to finish the roof vent and put cap shingles on top.

We got rained out today around lunch—good old downpour. We ate lunch, and a few of us went on a gas run with the St. John's Group with hope that it would lift up, but it really hasn't. I was sad because we were in a good work groove, and we're so close to finishing Queen's roof for her!

I've really been keeping in mind why I came down to work on houses, especially today when some of us were cutting the cap shingles. It sure seems like a daunting task, but they were part of the last piece to finishing the roof. God pulled me down here with a gentle tap in the back of my brain. It's for Him and for Queen that I'm in South Carolina helping roof a house, because I sure didn't have roofing experience, and I sure don't care much for heat and humidity. I just keep praying for Queen, her family, the community of Lane, and South Carolina that the people may know God and that He will draw teams like ours to help in any way we can. I'm just glad that we have hearts overflowing and hands willing to work to show God's love with a new roof.

Saturday, July 1, 2017- Sam Butler

This trip has been difficult for me emotionally but this whole team helped me through. About a week and a half before the trip I unexpectedly left my job of 7 years and have been feeling the effects of that coupled with my not-so-handy-ness and personal standards of workmanship. I want to thank Bill, Roger, Mira, Randy, and Heather for their understanding and patience. I want to thank Brad, Frank, April, Megan, Kyle, and Rich for their support as well. Despite my depressed state I was able to finally put things into perspective, after talking with Rich and Brad on Friday night. Today further emphasized the impact we've had on the communities of Andrews, Lane, Salters, and Kingstree. Randy and I went to Lilly's house today to do some odd jobs. While Randy meticulously worked on the ceiling fan I had the pleasure of talking with one of the most amazing and animated persons in Lilly. She told story after story about her life, family, and experiences. It was great to see her smile and facial expressions. Lilly talked highly of the teams that came before us, the work they did, but

more importantly to her the hope they gave her. It was a great way to end my trip to SC. THANKS FOR THE BBQ!!!

Saturday, July 1, 2017- April Butler

The end of a mission trip is always bittersweet for me. On one hand, I can't wait to get home to see my children! On the other hand, it is sad to say good-bye to the many new people I met this week who have touched my life in some way and who I may never cross paths with again. I have found with each mission trip, I end up getting something from it that I didn't expect. The sole purpose is not just about helping others. When I first said I would participate in this mission trip, I had many ideas of what "jobs" I may be doing, but replacing a roof was not something I thought I might be able to do. Two weeks before leaving, I found out that my team would be of all things, replacing a roof. I remember thinking, "Seriously God! Seriously what are you doing to me!" I started out the week, thinking God put me in this situation to push me to overcome some of my anxiety and fears. But as the week went on, I realized He had another purpose, a more powerful purpose. He knew I needed our team's homeowner, Queen, as much as she needed our team to put a new roof on her home.

Three days before we left for vacation and then came the mission trip, Sam and I found ourselves unexpectedly with a loss of income. I became very stressed and my anxiety level was at an all-time high. I was losing faith and hope in God. I started wondering if we were going to have enough money to pay all our bills, our mortgage, food for the kids? I didn't put it in God's hands. Then I met Queen. I got to hear some of her story, the difficult struggles and the sacrifices she had to make, but she never gave up hope and always had faith that God would be there to get her through and he did. I had the opportunity today to have a heartfelt conversation with her. I let her know how much she affected and blessed me this week. She told me that times will get hard, but God will be right there getting us through it. As the next days, weeks, months get hard for my family, I will remember Queen and plan to never lose my hope and faith in God. Queen said she had a testimony to give now that God provided her with a new roof. Because of Queen, I have a testimony to give too. So thank you for being who you are and blessing me not just this week, but the weeks to come as well.

Saturday, July 1, 2017-Roger Woods

Yesterday, a friend back home who has been searching for work for a long time was on my heart and in my prayers. As this was our last full day, I am both excited to get home but also sad that our work here is coming to an end when so much more needs to be done. I will add the folks down here to my prayers that things will improve. I have been impressed by their hope for a better life and the fact that they are working to make it happen. Our friend, Serenity, returned today wanting to fill one water bottle and begging for attention. This has been a good reminder that we are very blessed and that there is so much we take for granted. I was happy that we were able to accomplish so much at Sandy's home. The time together has been so rewarding, and I will be seeking out my newly made friends when we get back. I am thankful to God, to CUMC and Pastor Mira for giving us (and me) the chance to come down make a difference in a few folk's lives. I know they see our love for them and God.

Saturday, July 1, 2017-Bill Yufer

Finished two (2) houses this week—the last one we were pushed to get done. We didn't finish it the way we would have liked, but it got done. Had a good time with all of my "FRIENDS" this week - old and new ones. Started back to Carlisle and are spending the night in Greensboro, NC.

Saturday, July 1, 2017-Mira Hewlett

From the moment we got up until we pulled out of Trinity, it was a whirlwind day. Our worksite had a lot to finish up; and in a little space, it was a whirlwind of ladders, paint and bodies. Sam and Randy went to another house to finish up a punch list for another family.

At The Duke's, we met Mom, Keisha, and she was so thankful for our work. We talked more with Mika and Mikayla, who we impressed with the work and really great girls. We sanded mud inside and outside the closets, did a skim coat, rehung molding and trim, rehung doors, patched cracks on the roof vents, painted all the closet areas and bedroom wall. Oh, and tried to be ready to leave by 12 noon (we ended up leaving at 12:40). But we did our best in time allotted and got back to shower, pack and clean up by 2:30pm.

This week we've been blessed by the homeowners we met—their hope and faith in adversity, their openness and welcome to our team, and a beautiful church hosting us. We met and heard more from Ward Smith, the coordinator of projects all over South Carolina. He shared the process and their hope to have teams at least through summer 2018—they certainly have the homes to work on.

This evening we stopped in Greensboro with pizza and milkshakes around the pool with devotions. It was great hearing highs and God-moments of the week. Brad shared his prayer for the homeowners to share their testimonies—of how they saw God and how our work provided hope.

I love mission trips because when away from my normal schedule I am reminded how to be a blessing to others, reminded that everyone needs hope, and how many gifts we can all give. Our team has been great and worked really hard. May we each—in our jobs, families, community—continue to be an answer to others prayers and a reminder of God's love.