

Youth in Mission



By Janet Watts

At first I didn't think I had what it takes to go work in a foreign country. After seeing a video of Karen and Tom Godfrey's trip to the Dominican Republic, it changed my mind. "I can do that!"

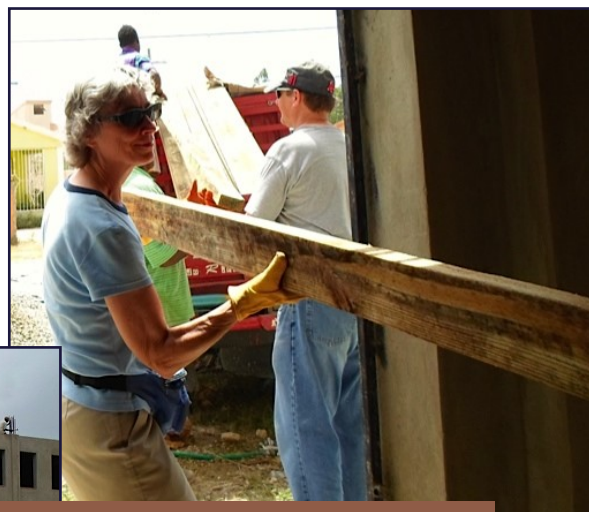
But there's a few extra things to consider when going out of the country. First, you need a passport (that's not expired). Second, there were shots to get - Hepatitis A and tetanus (had to be brave). These are just small hurdles to get over.

The Tampa Deanery has been taking groups to our companion diocese of the Dominican Republic for 15 years. Once you sign up, the Dominican Development Group arranges all your transportation, lodging, and meals. Each person works in fundraising events, asks for donations, and contributes out of their pocket to cover the cost, which also includes the building materials.

Other concerns I had were that I was not fluent in Spanish (hablo un poco). We always had a bilingual person with us and we always stayed in a group, so language problems were not a big issue.

Since these are church or school construction trips, and I had little experience in that, I also wondered how I would fit in. Well, there's a job for everybody. Most of the time we were asked to move boards, plywood, doors, rebar of all sizes, small buckets of rocks or cement, and cinder blocks from a huge pile to where it was needed. Sometimes we would start a "conga line" to get things moved more efficiently. We had a chance to nail boards to make a roof and also take nails out of wood so it could be used again. We had some painting parties, too. On my last trip, we built some pews and I learned to use a router.

Despite the language barrier, it was easy to see how happy the members of the congregation were that other Episcopalians were there to help them get the project done, not only for them, but for their children. Some members came everyday to work with us, including one woman who learned to use a drill! Not only did we worship together on Sunday, but we started each work day with English/Spanish Morning Prayer. We really worked and prayed together as one body in Christ. Why choose to go on a foreign mission trip? Because as the hymn says, "neighbors and nearby and far away."



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ISSUE

09

Mar/Apr
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Holy
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Church

The Defender

Chris Nowland,
Editor

Important Dates Coming Up:

March 29

Palm Sunday

8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
Church Services

April 5

Easter Sunday

8:00 & 10:30 a.m.
Church Services

**Breakfast & Egg
Hunt**

9:15 a.m.
Parish Hall

April 18

Parents' Night Out

5:00 p.m.
Church

May 2

Golf Tournament

1:00 p.m. Tee Off
River Hills Golf Club

May 10-17

Family Promise

All week
Kiser & Parish Halls

June 15-19

**Vacation Bible
School**

9:00 a.m. - 12 noon
Church buildings &
grounds

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From the Rector

Dear Friends in Christ,

During the past two years, I have been able to participate in two life-changing pilgrimage experiences. The first was my pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2013, which included an extended time of study and exploration in the city of Jerusalem. The second pilgrimage occurred during my sabbatical trip to Rome last summer. These two pilgrimage experiences are connected by a single word: *mission*.

In the book of Acts, Jesus sends forth the apostles to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This commissioning from Jesus set in motion a wave of missionary activity that swept across the first century Mediterranean world. We are familiar with the more well known characters, such as Peter and Paul, but there were countless others who risked their lives in order to participate in God's mission in the world.

During my time in Rome, I was able to visit several sites where early Christians were likely martyred for their faith in Christ. I also explored the archeological remains of early house churches, where small congregations of Christians gathered for prayer and the celebration of Holy Eucharist. These experiences reminded me that the work of mission has always been at the heart of the Christian faith. From Jerusalem to Rome to the ends of the earth, God's people are sent forth in the power of the Spirit to proclaim the good news of God's love and grace.

As we celebrate the work of mission this month, may we always be mindful of those who have walked this pathway of grace before us and may we be especially grateful for those who offered their lives for the sake of the gospel of Christ.

Faithfully In Christ,

Doug +

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Youth in Mission



By Chris Nowland

The time I helped out with the local mission trip was when I was in T.H.O.R.N. It was fun because there were kids my age and older that wanted to make a difference, help feed the poor, and give them some type of clothing. I had a friend go with me and he had a lot of fun helping the poor and making a difference. Even when it is a small difference it could make someone's day and make them smile. It's so cool have to help people out of the goodness of your heart.

The next mission trip the youth is going on is going to be epic. We are going to Vero Beach, FL, and it's going to be one big mission to help people with yard work and other things they need help with. It's going to make a difference. Some are going to leave like they did something that they felt was right. Others are going to have their first mission trip experience and they will feel like something that cannot be put in words.

Going on mission trips can teach you things that you can't learn anywhere else. You can learn to change lives for people who need to learn about God and how Jesus does amazing things.



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By Rachel Schnabel

Mission trips that include youth are great ways to help young people experience the remarkable blessings and growth found uniquely in service to others. These trips hold great potential to change lives at any age, but getting involved as a youth or young adult can set up a lifelong pattern of service that dramatically impacts every monumental life choice made as graduations, career options, and critical life choice come up. A youth trained to serve gains a unique perspective on life and the numerous blessings they are given.

Last summer, I led a mission trip to Ashville, North Carolina. We were able to paint and trim an entire house, and also spent time helping assist those working on the reroofing of our house and others in the neighborhood. Laurel Gallamore and Savannah Berger (from our parish) were great workers all week, and recently took some time to sit down with me and talk about their mission experience.

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Both women have been on a number of mission trips before this one. When she went to serve in the Dominican Republic at age eleven, Laurel said she went because she wanted to understand how blessed we are here and to experience a very different kind of life. Savannah also started with missions to the D.R. mainly because it was a family tradition and expectation. They both stated that family support and the concept that service is not optional played a huge role in their pursuit of mission work through the years.

"They say it's hard, but it's not *that* hard," Savannah stated about common misconceptions of mission work. "It's always easy to help someone," Laurel replied, "You have to be ready to put in effort." As Savannah stated, her favorite aspect of mission work is "letting them know that we're doing it for Jesus." They love the ability to show with their intentions and actions the true love of God. Mission work allows us all to show those who may doubt it that God is a real and active presence in our world, and that good things are done through his power, not just because of nice people.



Service highlights some of the most gratifying and simple pleasures of a Christian life. Savannah stated, "I like that we get to get away from *everything* for a while. Just be with your friends and help people." Mission work for youth helps them escape a culture of instant gratification and selfish goals to engage in a real way with peers, mentors, and those Christ calls us to serve.

