

Pastor's Corner July/August 2019

For many folks, summer is a time for traveling. Whether that means going down the shore, or up to the Pocono's, or somewhere further afield, summer is a time to travel. I know my family and I are looking forward to our vacation this summer.

But for the last nearly 20 years, youth and adults from St. Luke's have also taken part in a different kind of summer travel. Every summer we send a group on a Mission Trip. This year, we're sending 13 youth, some just entering high school, some already in high school, some just finishing high school, and some now in college, plus 7 adults to Dexter, Maine, which is west of Bangor, Maine, and just about the farthest away we've ever gone. While there, they, along with a lot of volunteers from all kinds of places, will do various types of home repair for folks in need. They will also bring the love of Jesus with them to these folks, and in their act of service, will also receive the love of Jesus from these folks. They will be a blessing, and they will be blessed. They will have fun, they will work hard, they will make new friends and become new friends, they will grow closer to each other, and closer to God. It is a special, blessed, and holy trip, and we should all be very proud of all 20 of these wonderful volunteers.

Jesus was once asked what the greatest commandment was, and Jesus replied, love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. Paul wrote that all of the commandments are summed up in loving your neighbor. If we are to take seriously our baptism and our life of faith, if we are to take seriously what it means to be a follower of Jesus, then we must take seriously the call to love our neighbor as ourselves.

When folks from our church go on a Mission Trip, that love is what compels them to do this. There are easier ways to spend a week in July. There are simpler, more relaxing ways to spend a week in July. But there is no more holy way to spend a week in July than by going someplace else, and doing hard work in the name of Jesus for the good of others. This is loving your neighbor put into concrete terms. This is loving your neighbor lived out in a very real way.

The truth is, we all have a real desire to help others. We all have within else the will to do good for others. We all have within us the love that compels us to reach out, lift up, help out, make a difference, lend a helping hand, and do something that makes someone else better in some way. It's why we support a food pantry and a clothing collection. It's why we give 10% of the funds we raise from events like the recent Indoor Flea Market to a good cause outside of the normal life of the congregation. It's why a growing number of adults from our congregation go do mission work, construction work, to places like Cancun, and why we support Steve and Debbie Buckner in Honduras. It's also why we support agencies outside of the congregation that do good for others.

We all have within us a good and loving heart, and a good and loving desire to help. My hope is that we can all find more ways to share that heart and that desire, that we can all become more involved in more good ways.

Actually, it's more than a hope, because I truly believe we can. We already see love in action through the folks going to Maine, and in the work we already do. The need is great, but God has given all of us the will, and the means, to meet those needs.

Our mission is to the world around us, and not just to ourselves. Open your hearts, to let out the love that God

already fills our hearts with. Let us always be the church that brings healing and hope to all. Let us always be, not just as has been suggested “The Little Church on Big Road”, but, “The Little Church on Big Road with the Generous Heart”. See you in church!

Peace,
Pr. Paul