

St. Joseph's Mission Trip – 2018

St. Joseph's Episcopal Church's Mission Trip to the Florida Keys



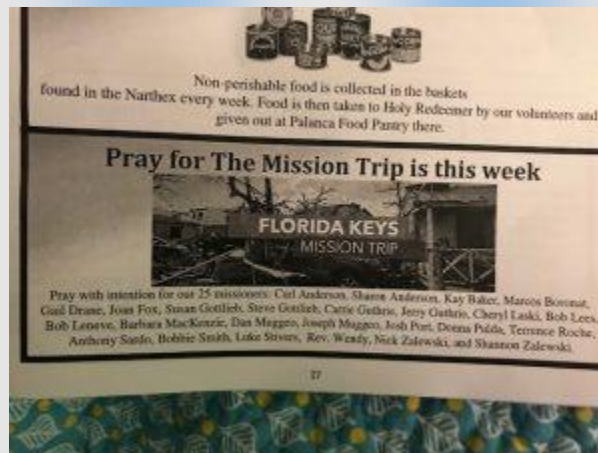
MARCH 18, 2018

We will love like Jesus loved.



We prayed with the congregation at the 9:30 service vowing to love as Jesus loved in our Disaster Relief trip to Marathon. We encircled the altar and vowed to love as Jesus loved.

We ask for your prayers this week. Unfortunately Dan and Joseph Muggeo cannot be with us due to the recent fall of Dan's mom, Madeline. We are praying for her. Dan and Joseph are still going to create our power point that you will all see on Sunday and we are grateful.



We stopped at Alabama Jack's for lunch on the way down and Jerry danced up a storm.



We had bumper to bumper traffic from Key Largo to the other side of Islamorada due to a Seafood Festival. We all arrived safe and sound, though, and settled into our rooms and then went to St. Columba where Rev. Debra and Rick (the disaster relief coordinator there) welcomed us to dinner. They then shared a power point and talk about what life has been like for them the past six months. They were visibly shaken. They have been through so much and are very grateful to have us here. I'll have lots more pictures tomorrow of all of our work. We are grateful for your support of our trip and are excited about doing God's work in this world this week here.

March 20, 2018

In the sure and certain hope... day 2



Monday reflection (written really early Tuesday... just too tired last night)

This cross now stands in front of St. Columba's Iona House which holds their church office and meeting rooms. It was carved out of the stump that remained of a huge tree after Hurricane Irma took it down. It stands as a reminder of the sure and certain hope of Christ's resurrection... of the hope these people carry in their recovery. Being here in this week before Holy Week, we are reminded of Christ's overcoming even death. And we are seeing the evidence of the faith and resilience of the good people of the Middle Keys following Irma's devastation here. They are rising once again, though the journey continues to be so very challenging.

Cheryl, Carrie, Susan, and Sharon were up well before dawn to prepare a wonderful breakfast for us. Then we met in our prayer circle and were led in prayer by Gail, Barbara, Marcos, and Kay, our Monday prayer team. We remembered St. Joseph on this his feast day... his humility and willingness to serve Mary and our Lord. Luke, Josh, and Anthony led us in 'When The Saints go Marching In' with keyboard & guitar and Anthony's voice. We traveled then to St. Columba's to be briefed by Rev. Debra and set out to visit the sites where we'd be working:



Revs. Wendy and Debra

(Below) Monday briefing at Nearly New Thrift Shop which benefits Hammock House, and after school program for families with children that cannot afford after care. Needs taping, spackling, fire wall, ceiling, painting, and then tiling.



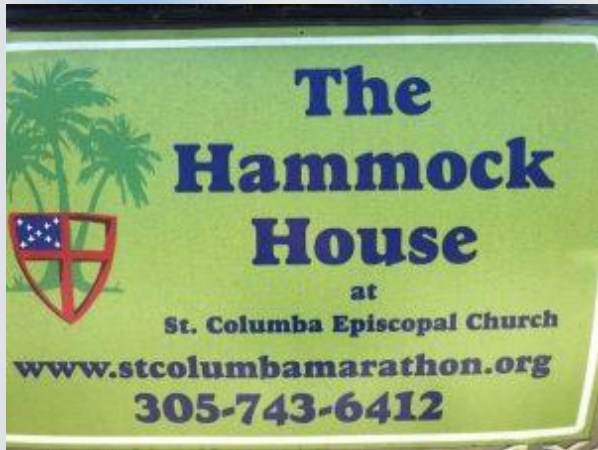
(Left below) Team Scorpion, Bob, Jerry, and Steve – laying out the string for the fence in front of Hammock House. They discovered fence will need 27 post holes and 20 of them go into coral rock! Ugh Solution forthcoming. They did have a 3-4" scorpion friend. (Right below) Can't really see from here but the woman in red is Jodi, who works with Rev. Debra. This room was just FULL of all the donated clothes and items for the thrift store, many of which came from all of you, dear parishioners.



Our team worked so very hard today. Great progress everywhere then a beautiful dinner and evening prayer circle. We give thanks.











March 20, 2018

“What a glorious day.” – Eddie

Eddie has worked at our hotel for ten years. He told me yesterday that each member of his family always went to church but not him and now.... now he has claimed the risen Lord as his own and he says, “A_____! What a glorious day.”



He told us that seeing our prayer circle morning and night is a thing of the Holy Spirit. We invited him in for prayer this morning and he said he “just knew” he was going to part of our circle this morning. We were glad he was.



Our prayer team led us in stretching and then a beautiful reflection on St. Cuthbert on this his feast day. Our three youth and Nick and Shannon got energized with this cheer: [Video](#)

We all met with Rev. Debra at St. C's and then left for job sites including a new one with Mr. Williams. His home was totally destroyed by the storm and had to be knocked down. With only a 40k insurance policy, he's now living in a trailer on his property and every day puts one piece of wood, one roof tile, one nail, into the dumpster. Though really hot work in the sun, our crew loved their time with him. He wouldn't accept sandwiches or snacks from us but only wanted to give to us.



Josh, Luke, and Marcos really worked hard! Those white pillars you see in the picture above are the corners of where his home used to be.



Meanwhile, back at St. Columba's work progressed with Uncle Bob, Jerry, Steve, and Josh. We had to rent a bobcat with a huge auger attachment to enable our team to drill

through the coral rock. They managed to complete all 27 postholes. Pray our inspector comes bright and early and passes everything so they can get to building.



Josh measures for the postholes with Jerry at the other end





Across the street all of the clothes are now sorted and ready to be priced and hung (this is a tiny portion of all that was sorted. Down the street the thrift shop dry wall was just about finished and tomorrow they can paint. Hoping to tile by end of the week. Getting closer. Great work:



We ended our day with Taco Tuesday by our fabulous chefs, Sharon, Carrie, Susan, and Cheryl and then a beautiful closing prayer circle with lots of heartfelt moments shared. Oh, and we finally got the St. Columba's sign back up on the highway! Yes, Eddie, "What a glorious day."



March 21, 2018

'Lean on Me' in the morning and 'Here I am, Lord' at night

I overheard today's prayer team last night when they were planning for today and the title of this post is what I heard as they were confirming with our 'band' (Luke, Josh, and Anthony) the songs for morning and evening prayer circle time. What fitting bookends for a very humbling day. We leaned on our Lord to give us understanding, patience, flexibility, gratitude, and overflowing joy and we weren't disappointed. (By the way: Please forgive me for not being able to upload any pictures for you tonight we have so many beautiful ones. I'll try to fix the problem and send you double tomorrow. Long story)

Six of us began the day in the pre-dawn darkness with yoga and a guided meditation by Luke. Then after a delicious breakfast (did I say our chef Cheryl and sous chefs are just the best? they are!) and then a sacred morning prayer circle by our team for today (Jerry, Joan, Carl, Steve, and Bob Leneve) we headed to St. Columba's for our daily check in with Rev. Debra.

As we listened to her we are slowly climbing our learning curve in realizing the true plight of these dear residents of the Middle Keys. We leaned on our Lord as we heard that 20% of the 73k residents of the Keys aren't coming back which is just devastating to the economy here as you can imagine. And (!) it's mostly the local work force who find themselves without homes now... the fish market manager, the restaurant workers, the school bus drivers, and on and on. One manager of a Pizza Hut and her three year old daughter will be moving into one of the trailers that was just vacated from the lot set up here at St. Columba. (Her parents lost their home of 60 years on Big Pine Key.) Barbara, Gail, Kay, Bobbie, and Joan) helped to stock it and make it homelike. We'll meet them in the morning. Their story is one of countless thousands.

That crew was also able to begin tagging all of the Thrift Shop stuff that they so carefully sorted.

And the Thrift Shop is coming along: Terrance and his trusty team got the second coat of paint on the walls. Hoping to tile tomorrow. Great job Terrance, Carl, Shannon, Nick, Donna, Luke, and Josh!

Over at the Hammock House (free after care program for kids whose parents are working and can't afford after care): As frustrating as it was for Bob and Steve to be waiting for the inspector he finally did show up and then Anthony joined them in the afternoon and they set 17 of the 27 poles in cement so they can start building the slats tomorrow. I don't know if Steve and Bob even barely stopped for lunch. Knowing these children will have a safe place to play means everything.

Bobbie and Sharon continue to provide us with yummy sandwiches and snacks every day for lunch. And big thanks to Dan Muggeo who, even though he and Joseph cannot be with us, is still creating the PowerPoint we'll show on Sunday.

Most of the others on our team worked at Mr. Williams' homesite filling a dumpster with the debris from that demolition. Wait til you see those pictures! Marcos, Bob Leneve, Jerry, Carl, Sharon, Susan, and Carrie (and joined by Donna later) just worked so hard. The second dumpster is filled and third one on the way tomorrow. This family too share like circumstances with so many others.

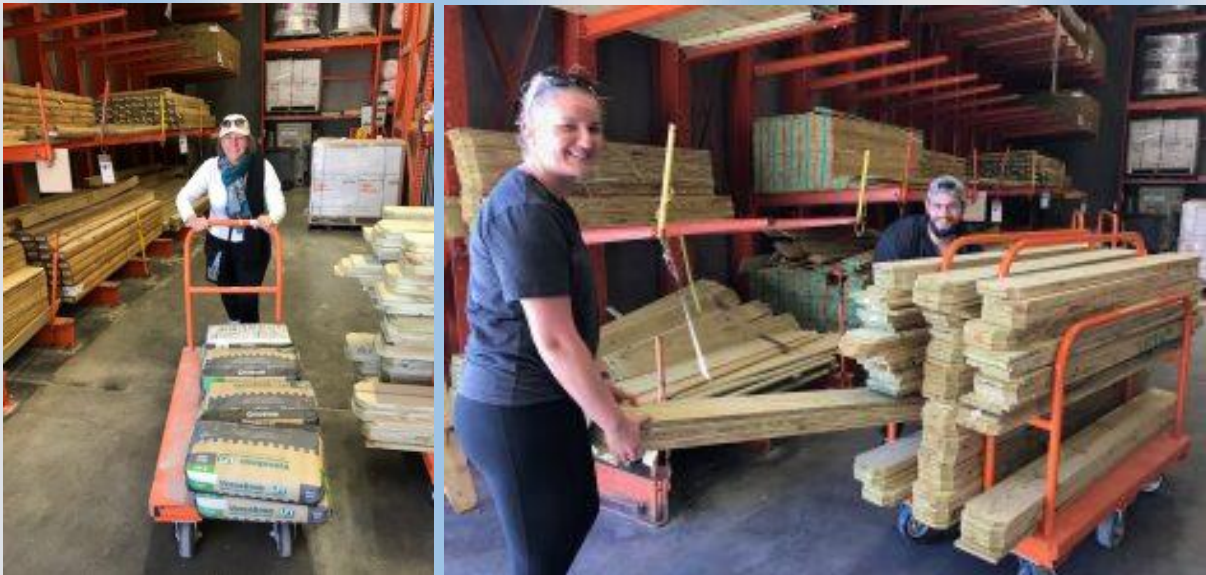
Exhausted, everyone enjoyed a delicious Italian dinner and evening prayer circle... We'll all fall into bed saying, 'Here I am, Lord.' I can say without reservation that this team gives great thanks for being able to help as we can. What a privilege to walk this journey with them helping in this small, yet powerful, way of Christ's love.

March 23, 2018

Learning to be 'unupsettable', our new goal. :) – Thursday

The weather has been really windy and cool. We huddled in to the little room by the pool for our morning prayer so we could be warm and hear one another. (we're such Floridians...) . Uncle Bob, Josh, Anthony, & Luke led us in prayer with the fitting collect being St. Francis prayer, 'make me an instrument of your peace...'

Our focus today will be getting toward completion of our three main projects: the Hammock House fence, the Thrift Shop, and the clothes pricing and storing. Once we all went to our work sites, Shannon, Nick, and I headed to Home Depot to get supplies for the fence and tiling.



It's certainly coming along and the big toy makes it fun!



At the thrift shop second coat of painting is almost there and tiling beginning under the “unupsettable” leadership of Terrance



Under Gail's organization over half of the thousands of pieces of clothes are tagged and into bins and then (!) they were able to outfit one of the trailers and its new grateful owner, Nicole, came and picked it up.



Friday post will be lots of 'finished product' pictures for you, finally. We are so very grateful for the privilege of working here.

March 24, 2018

Friday was a very good day



Our time here in Marathon is drawing to a close and we were able to finish all three of our projects! This is what the fence looked like in the am:



And this at day's end:



Thousands of clothes for the Thrift Shop have been sorted, priced, and neatly stored in bins.



This picture doesn't do these ladies the honor they deserve. Gail, Barbara, Bobbie, Kay, and Joan worked tirelessly all week in a small room and all with joy knowing they are helping countless people have clothes and funding the Hammock House for kids who need after care and their families cannot afford it. Thank you Team Gail and her thrifty ladies!

And, speaking of thrift shop. Just about everybody helped at one point or another during the week dry walling, taping, sanding, painting, and finally tiling and all under Terrance's 'unupsettable' guidance and skill.



The tile guys



All week we've had absolutely delicious meals lovingly prepared by our chef Cheryl and sous chefs Susan, Sharon, and Carrie all prepared out of a very tiny kitchen in Cheryl and Kay's room and for our special Friday night dinner fresh yellowtail snapper:



Sharon and Bobbie were our snack and lunch team (Bobbie not pictured below, unfortunately)



Our waterside dining area

We could not have come and lived out our call to mission in this Disaster Relief trip without all of the fund raising, extra donations. A special shout out to Bob Lees and Jerry Guthrie and all who helped in the many days working at Roger Dean concession stand. Thanks so much!



This is just one day's crew for Roger Dean pictured here.

There will be many more pictures in our power point that we'll share this Sunday. We so appreciate the opportunity to come and serve here and we give all the glory to God!

