

First Congregational Church
West Virginia Mission Trip Report
July 24, 2006
The Bethany Network

Title: Renovating Homes and Hearts

After driving hundreds of miles to Delbarton, West Virginia, improving homes all week, and creating countless memories among the friendly folk with a southern twang, the mission team from First Congregational Church has begun reflecting on the impact of this life-changing trip.

Leader Christopher Nunn commented, "It showed me that even a small group of people can do enough to create change." He added, "Everyone has something to give, but giving yourself for a week to those in need can create a rewarding experience unlike anything else."

The team, consisting of high school students and adult leaders, gave a week of their summer to paint a home and build a wheelchair ramp for families in need, while also providing activities for the town's children. Throughout the week the FCC team also participated in scavenger hunts and cultural events that fostered a wonderful rapport with the residents. Samantha Pierce, a student from FCC, remarked that everyone was very friendly and grateful.

As the team worked among the people of Delbarton the students were inspired by their spirit. "Thought they have so little, they are still able to be such optimists. They were the happiest and most welcoming people that I have ever met," commented Kinsey House.

In addition, the presence of the students provided hope and motivation for the residents. Student Emily Welsh related the story of how one home owner began to clean up his yard and the rest of his house after the students began painting it.

Rev. Matthew Laney, associate pastor at FCC shared the motivation behind the trip and some of the benefits. "The most rewarding thing for me was seeing the students eyes and hearts open to poverty and develop Jesus' servant heart and his eye for injustice. Poverty is a matter of corporate responsibility."

Laney added, "There are hundreds of verses in which God's judgment is aroused against a country for idolatry and neglect of the poor. We couldn't help but be awakened to this in Delbarton."

Inspired by First Peter 3:3-4, a verse from the New Testament, Emily Welsh summed up the significance of the trip to West Virginia for herself. "This trip helped me to remember that we all need to look closer at people to see the inner beauty and not be turned away or disillusioned by what is on the outside. The people in Delbarton may not have had much but they were willing to give everything. This trip helped me to be able to see the inner beauty in others and in myself again."

For more information about future mission trips or the youth group, contact Rev. Laney at FCC at 362-2709.